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# Elementary ENGLISH

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# ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

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## Reading Success and Emotional Adjustment

PAUL WITTY<sup>1</sup>

In recent years attention has been repeatedly directed to the need for educational programs that are designed to fulfill basic human needs. Lists of needs vary. Some writers emphasize: (1) the need for physical well-being, (2) the need for social acceptance and effective group membership, and (3) the need for "ego-status" that accompanies attainment of esteemed goals. This list has been extended or modified. One writer refers to the significance of the following "developmental tasks" in the lives of adolescents: (1) adjusting to age mates, (2) achieving independence of parents and family, (3) selecting and preparing for an occupation, (4) achieving social responsibility and social loyalty, and (5) developing the self.<sup>2</sup> When needs are reasonably met, individuals tend to be happy and well-adjusted. On the other hand, when needs are denied or inadequately satisfied, maladjustment usually follows. It is not surprising, therefore, that writers stress the close association between subject failure and emotional disturbance, since failure in reading may result in the child's loss of social status or of self-respect.

In the *Review of Educational Research*, December 1949, Howard Y. McClusky states: "Evidence is accumulating

in support of the thesis that the learning of any subject must be viewed in terms of the total personality of the learner. Impressive confirmation of this point is contained in studies of reading difficulties."<sup>3</sup> For example, a recent summary by David Russell reveals that emotional difficulties are frequently reported among children who have experienced failure or extreme retardation in reading.<sup>4</sup> Since skill in reading is essential for maximum success in almost every subject in the curriculum, this result is a logical expectancy.

Some authorities appear to believe that emotional difficulties cause poor reading. Among the frequently quoted investigations, Phyllis Blanchard's case-

<sup>1</sup>Professor of Education, Northwestern University.

<sup>2</sup>Havighurst, Robert J. "Characteristics, Interests, and Needs of Pupils that Aid in Defining the Nature and Scope of the Reading Program," in *Adjusting Reading Programs to Individuals* (W. S. Gray, Ed.) Supplementary Educational Monograph, No. 52. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941, pp. 53-59.

<sup>3</sup>McClusky, Howard Y., "Mental Health in Schools and Colleges." *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. XIX, No. 5, (December 1949), pp. 405-412.

<sup>4</sup>Russell, David. "Reading Disabilities and Mental Health." *Understanding the Child*, Vol. XVI, No. 1 (January 1947), pp. 24-32.

studies are of special interest.<sup>5</sup> She points out that reading failure and problem behavior are associated closely. Moreover, emotional instability may cause reading failure. Marion Monroe concludes that poor readers almost invariably display emotional disturbances of varying degrees of severity, including: (a) resistance and aggressive dislike of reading, (b) withdrawal tendencies, (c) apathy and discouragement, and (d) compensatory mechanisms.<sup>6</sup>

A number of other case-studies seem to confirm the conclusion that personality problems and reading difficulties are related. Because of the closeness of this association, analysts frequently stress the necessity for employing therapeutic measures to permit expression and to relieve tensions. For example, Emmy Sylvester and Mary S. Kunst, after making case-studies of a small group of disabled readers of ages 8 to 13, conclude that poor readers should be looked upon as emotional problems.<sup>7</sup> A similar conclusion has been drawn by Samuel C. Karlan. This investigator asserts that emotional problems account for the failure of most secondary school pupils whose intelligence quotients are high.<sup>8</sup>

Some writers who have utilized the case-study technique stress the theory of multiple causation. Thus, Simon H. Tulchin presents four case-studies to show that remedial programs must be worked out in accord with the special needs of each case. The facts cited preclude a rigid adherence to a single program or method.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Russell G. Stauffer recommends the recognition of multiple causation in the case of the poor reader.<sup>10</sup>

After considering a number of investigations reported before 1940, Wilking questions the assumption that poor readers invariably display emotional maladjustment.

There are many inadequacies in the case-study approach to reading disabilities which cause one to hesitate before placing great credence in any single therapeutic approach. It has been amply demonstrated that the preponderant number of reading disabilities respond to a straight educational approach and involve little or no personality maladjustment. Much more study of the problem is necessary before definite conclusions can be drawn concerning the role played by personality as a causative factor, or even as an accompanying factor, in reading disability, (p. 277).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Blanchard, Phyllis. "Psychoanalytic Contributions to the Problems of Reading Disabilities." *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, Vol. II, (1946), pp. 163-187.

<sup>6</sup>Monroe, Marion. "Diagnosis and Treatment of Reading Disabilities." *Educational Diagnosis*, 34th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. Bloomington, Illinois: Public School Publishing Company, 1935, pp. 201-228.

<sup>7</sup>Sylvester, Emmy and Kunst, Mary S. "Psychodynamic Aspects of the Reading Problem." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. XIII, No. 1, (January 1943), pp. 69-76.

<sup>8</sup>Karlan, Samuel C. "Failure in Secondary School as a Mental Hygiene Problem." *Mental Hygiene*, Vol. XVIII (October 1934), pp. 611-620.

<sup>9</sup>Tulchin, Simon H. "Emotional Factors in Reading Disabilities in School Children." *The Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. XXVI (September 1935), pp. 443-454.

<sup>10</sup>Stauffer, Russell G. "A Clinical Approach to Personality and the Disabled Reader." *Education*, Vol. LXVII (March 1947), pp. 427-435.

<sup>11</sup>Wilking, S. Vincent. "Personality Maladjustment as a Causative Factor in Reading Disability." *The Elementary School Journal*, Vol. XLII (December 1941), pp. 268-279.



Indeed, a considerable amount of investigation does lead one to question the emphasis on emotional factors as causes of poor reading. For example, almost two decades ago, Margaret R. Ladd questioned the close relationship of reading ability to personality adjustment as a result of her study of 315 elementary school pupils. Relationships were calculated between reading ability and socio-economic status of home, play interests, and general personality adjustment.<sup>12</sup>

Arthur I. Gates observed in 1941 that there is no single personality pattern which characterizes the poor reader. Moreover, personality difficulties or maladjustments do not invariably result in reading problems.<sup>13</sup> Symptoms such as withdrawal, aggression, or chronic worry may appear "when the maladjustment is the cause, the result or the concomitant of reading difficulty." Gates stresses the need for employing control groups in studies of the relationship of emotional problems and reading difficulty.

#### *Comparisons of Groups of Good and of Poor Readers*

Edith Gann studied three groups of superior, average, and good readers in the elementary school to whom the Rorschach Test, Pintner's Aspect of Personality Test, and a personality rating scale were administered.<sup>14</sup> As a result of the Rorschach testing, Gann concludes that in comparison with the other groups, poor readers are "emotionally less well-adjusted and less stable, insecure and fearful in relation to emotionally challenging situations, and socially less adaptable." Personality factors appear to be of utmost importance in the case of success or failure in reading.

Nothing concerning the Retarded Reader's school experience, the teachers who taught him, nor the methods used in teaching him was so different in relation to Average and Good Readers that the reason for the difficulties might be found here. The information concerning conditions of vision, hearing, and general health discloses no defects that are more unusual or extreme in the case of the Retarded Reader. The most pertinent clues, therefore, are in relation to the personality adjustments which do differentiate the groups. Uncertainty, however, still remains, with reference to the causes of the personality difficulties.

Implications from the findings in this study may be applied to the practical school situation where the Retarded Reader should be considered as a personality problem, as well as a learning problem. Consideration of his reading difficulty cannot be made apart from his personality adjustment and his attitudes toward the reading experience. Helping to build emotional security may be essential in stimulating greater participation and better achievements,<sup>15</sup> (pp. 139-140).

A comparative study of advanced and retarded readers in the Fordson Public Schools has recently been reported by Joseph Jackson. Pupils in grades 2-6 were given standard tests. The upper and lower quarters were compared. Although Jackson stresses the fact that the causes of reading disability are "many and inter-

<sup>12</sup>Ladd, Margaret R. "The Relation of Social, Economic and Personal Characteristics to Reading Ability." *Teachers College Contributions to Education*, No. 582. New York: Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, 1933.

<sup>13</sup>Gates, Arthur I. "The Role of Personality Maladjusting in Reading Disability." *Pedagogical Seminary and Journal of Genetic Psychology*, Vol. LIX (First Half) (September 1941), pp. 77-83.

<sup>14</sup>Gann, Edith. *Reading Difficulty and Personality Organization*. New York: King's Crown Press, 1945.

<sup>15</sup>Gann, Edith, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-140.

twined," he concludes that the survey reveals "the necessity for greater attention to the extraneous factors influencing reading success such as personality traits, home conditions, . . ."<sup>16</sup>

Mary I. Preston studied 100 reading failures in grades 2-10 to determine the effect of failure in reading upon the child's security at home, in school, and with his peers. A control group of sixty-seven good readers was employed. Data obtained through interviews revealed that failure in school causes "blighting insecurity" in "normal" children. Invidious comparisons create further insecurities in the home and among their peers.<sup>17</sup> Preston stresses the significance of the behavior of the parents of poor readers, most of whom resort to disagreeable comparisons and reproach. More drastic measures such as removal of privileges and the use of physical punishment are also employed at times.<sup>18</sup>

#### *Detailed Studies of Poor Readers*

Helen Robinson's studies of severely retarded readers have led her to emphasize the significance of the child's home background and social environment.<sup>19</sup> She states:

Thirty severely retarded readers with Binet IQ's between 85 and 137 were examined by each of these specialists. Anomalies were identified, and the findings were presented.

Following the individual examinations, the specialists met and attempted to evaluate these anomalies and to identify possible causes of reading retardation operating in each case. Finally, an intensive remedial program for twenty-two of the thirty cases was undertaken to secure evidence of the potency of each of these possible causes. . . . (p. 219).

[These data] emphasize the importance of the home and of the social environment on the total adjustment of the child. They imply that a stable, wholesome home environment exerts a definite influence on the school progress of the child. . . . Unfortunately, many families are either unaware of the significance of the relationship just considered or are unable to control the conditions that create favorable ones, (pp. 222-223).

W. H. Missildine studied the emotional status and family background of thirty children with reading difficulties.<sup>20</sup> All had IQ's 90 or above; they were free from visual and hearing defects. Eighty-five per cent were boys. Ten of the thirty cases had mothers who were "critical, hostile, rejecting persons." Ten other children had "tense, coercive, perfectionist mothers." With one exception, these children were "insecure, restless, emotionally ill." Missildine concluded that we may harm children who are poor readers unless we consider the reading difficulty in

<sup>16</sup>Jackson, Joseph (Fordson Public Schools, Dearborn, Michigan). "A Survey of Psychological, Social, and Environmental Differences between Advanced and Retarded Readers." *The Pedagogical Seminary and Journal of Genetic Psychology*, Vol. LXV (First Half) (September 1944), pp. 113-131.

<sup>17</sup>Preston, Mary I. "Reading Failure and the Child's Security." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. 10 (April 1940), pp. 239-252.

<sup>18</sup>Preston, Mary I. "The Reaction of Parents to Reading Failure." *Child Development*, Vol. X (September 1939), pp. 173-179.

<sup>19</sup>Robinson, Helen M. *Why Pupils Fail in Reading*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1946.

<sup>20</sup>Missildine, W. H. "The Emotional Background of Thirty Children with Reading Disabilities with Emphasis on Its Coercive Elements." *The Nervous Child*, Vol. V, No. 3 (July 1946), pp. 263-272.

relationship to more fundamental personality disturbances.

Wesley Wiksell investigated the relationship between reading difficulties and emotional adjustment in cases referred to in the *Stephens College Reading Clinic*. The students with reading difficulties showed "introverted behavior patterns with marked feelings of inferiority, immature personalities, broken drive, feelings of insecurity."<sup>21</sup>

Albert Ellis studied one hundred cases referred to the Northern New Jersey Mental Hygiene Clinic. He concluded that there are emotional factors in many, if not all, cases of reading disability. These factors are inextricably linked with education, intelligence, and other considerations. Effective treatment involves "the total personality of the child rather than some set of particular sensory or intellectual faculties."<sup>22</sup> The observations of Ellis are similar to those of R. Challman, who two decades ago asserted that about three fourths of poor readers develop personality problems, and display nervousness, withdrawal tendencies, aggression, defeatism, or chronic worries, and anxieties.<sup>23</sup>

Pauline G. Vorhaus offers the hypothesis that non-reading is an expression of resistance as a "tentative explanation of what the writer has found to be the most frequent single picture associated with non-reading."<sup>24</sup>

Specific factors such as mental retardation, technical reading and studying difficulties, marked visual and hearing defects, and health factors necessitating constant school absence were ruled out as playing, at most, a contributory, rather than a main role in the situation.<sup>25</sup>

In the *Science News Letter*, June 18, 1949, Dr. Joseph F. Hughes, Dr. Richard Leander, and Dr. Gilbert Ketcham are quoted as stating:

Emotional upsets can account for difficulty in reading in an otherwise intelligent child. . . . Situations that make the child feel insecure such as family quarrels, rivalries with sisters or brothers, and difficulties in social relationships may result in a specific reading disability. . . . no child has a specific reading difficulty without at the same time developing some kind of emotional disturbance.<sup>26</sup>

Helen Robinson, in a study published in 1949, presents data on fifty-two children from the Lower School at the University of Chicago. Of these children, thirty-eight received remedial instruction. Sixteen (or 42 per cent) exhibited emotional problems. Seven of the sixteen displayed aggressive behavior; six gave evidence of withdrawal. Three alternated in their behavior and exhibited extreme tension.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Wiksell, Wesley. "The Relationship between Reading Difficulties and Psychological Adjustment." *Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. XLI, No. 7, (March 1948), pp. 557-558.

<sup>22</sup>Ellis, Albert. "Results of Mental Hygiene Approach to Reading Disability Problems." *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, Vol. XIII, (February 1949), pp. 56-61.

<sup>23</sup>Challman, R. "Personality Maladjustment and Remedial Reading." *Journal of Exceptional Children*, Vol. VI, (October 1929) pp. 9-10.

<sup>24</sup>Vorhaus, Pauline G. "Non-Reading as an Expression of Resistance." *Rorschach Research Exchange*, Vol. X, No. 2 (June 1946), pp. 60-69.

<sup>25</sup>Vorhaus, Pauline G. op. cit.

<sup>26</sup>(No author). "Emotional Upsets May Affect Reading Ability." *Science News Letter*, June 18, 1949, Vol. LV, p. 397.

<sup>27</sup>Robinson, Helen M. "Emotional Problems Exhibited by Poor Readers. Manifestations of Emotional Maladjustment." *Clinical Studies in Reading I*. By the Staff of the Reading Clinics of the University of Chicago. Supplementary Educational Monograph, No. 68. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (June 1949).

Robinson reports also on seventy pupils in the Upper School — forty-one of whom were given remedial instruction. Only eight of these forty-one (or 19 per cent) displayed unusual emotional or personality problems. Included in her report are fourteen other boys and girls from Chicago. Seven showed emotional or personality problems. Two were aggressive; four were withdrawn; and one was emotionally immature and dependent.

In general these pupils exhibited three types of behavior; aggression, withdrawal tendencies, and general tension accompanied by fears. In most of these cases, improvement in symptoms and in attitudes accompanied remedial work.

Leone M. Burfield found that thirty-two (or 27.6 per cent) of 116 college students who received training at the University of Chicago Reading Clinics displayed fairly pronounced symptoms of emotional maladjustment, while ten per cent showed less pronounced tendencies.

The most common cause of emotional disturbance was the difficulty experienced in making adjustments to the scholastic requirements of the College. The most frequent manifestations of an emotional problem were anxiety, fear, and withdrawal.<sup>28</sup>

#### *Therapy Suggests Causes*

Virginia Axline's work has received attention recently because a remarkable cure for poor readers transpired when primary attention was given to emotional therapy.<sup>29</sup> Axline selected thirty-seven very poor readers in the second grade—eight girls and twenty-nine boys of IQ's 80 to 148. They were placed under a teacher who endeavored to give these children "the opportunity and the per-

missiveness to be themselves in her classroom, to get their feelings and attitudes out in the open, to learn to know themselves, to release their tensions and thus to clear the way for more positive and constructive growth."

No remedial efforts were undertaken although the pupils had an opportunity to read whenever they chose. At the end of three and one half months, gains in personal adjustment were reported, as well as marked improvement in reading ability as revealed by tests. The author states:

This study indicates that a nondirective therapeutic approach might be helpful in solving certain "reading problems." It indicates that it would be worthwhile to set up research projects to test this hypothesis further: that non-directive therapeutic procedures applied to children with reading problems are effective not only in bringing about a better personal adjustment, but also in building up a readiness to read.<sup>30</sup> (p. 69).

Axline has recently presented additional data to support her views. She describes some of the problems found in poor readers who are being treated by non-directive therapy.

Nondirective therapy is a way of helping people help themselves by providing a treatment experience that is client-centered. It is based upon the as-

<sup>28</sup>Burfield, Leone M. "Emotional Problems of Poor Readers among College Students." *Clinical Studies in Reading I*. By the Staff of the Reading Clinics of the University of Chicago. Supplementary Educational Monograph, No. 68. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (June 1949).

<sup>29</sup>Axline, Virginia M. "Non-Directive Therapy for Poor Readers." *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, Vol. XI, No. 2, (March-April 1947), pp. 61-69.

<sup>30</sup>Axline, Virginia M. *op. cit.* p. 69.



sumption that the client has within himself strong, curative forces, has within himself the ability to solve his own problem if given an opportunity to do so, has within himself a strong drive toward complete self-realization or fulfillment.<sup>31</sup> (p. 141).

A somewhat similar position is held by Mary S. Kunst who stresses the significance of the teacher's attitude and approach:

I view marked reading failure as a symptom of a general personality disturbance, and I attempt to treat the child for the emotional disturbance, I do not deny the success and appropriateness in some cases of treating the symptom. I believe, however, that success often comes because the tutor has intuitively met some of the basic needs of the child. I believe that in the long run, the individual child will be better helped, and we shall learn more about preventing reading failure, if we try to understand why reading failure is utilized as a protective symptom.<sup>32</sup> (p. 135).

Kunst recommends, too, that the teacher recognize the importance of unfavorable attitudes and behavior on the part of parents in affecting the child's attitudes. She states:

(1) First, the therapist must try to function in a manner *opposite* the behavior of parents or others who have been instrumental in creating the emotional conflict in the child; and

(2) Second, the child must be given an opportunity to re-experience, again and again, in smaller doses and in a safer setting, the situation he has been avoiding through fear, or through inability to cope with the problem. He thus learns, through re-education, to supplant his unhealthy handling of his conflict by a more constructive satisfying solution.<sup>33</sup> (pp. 135-136).

Other investigators emphasize the value of emotional therapy in remedial work.

Although the writer of this article recognizes the significance of such therapy, he believes one should recognize also the fact that improvement in reading skill sometimes brings about improvement in emotional adjustment. In such cases, conditions which lead to reading gains are frequently conducive to improvement in emotional status. Good remedial instruction is often planned to fulfill the child's basic needs; his physical condition is diagnosed and treatment is provided if it is required; interests are ascertained and reading experiences are associated with them; and provision is made for the pupil to attain "ego status" through successful endeavor. The child's improved reading ability often enables him to engage more effectively and happily in group work. Such a program offers emotional expression and therapy. It would be difficult under such circumstances to ascertain the relative influences of emotional therapy and of the educational program in effecting gains. To be sure, the expression of emotional drives does help poor readers and should be recognized as an important phase of a successful program of instruction. The writer has emphasized repeatedly the value in remedial work of expression

<sup>31</sup>Axline, Virginia M. "Treatment of Emotional Problems of Poor Readers by Non-directive Therapy." *Clinical Studies in Reading I*. By the Staff of the Reading Clinics of the University of Chicago. Supplementary Educational Monograph, No. 68. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (June 1949).

<sup>32</sup>Kunst, Mary S. "Psychological Treatment in Reading Disability." *Clinical Studies in Reading I*. By the Staff of the Reading Clinics of the University of Chicago. Supplementary Educational Monograph, No. 68. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (June 1949).

<sup>33</sup>Kunst, Mary S. *op. cit.*, pp. 135-136.

through: play, creative writing, art, story-telling, and drama. Children may be better understood as well as helped by such expression. As J. E. Bell states:

... in the early grades there must be abundant opportunity for art, play, and story-telling which permit the child to express his fantasy. Through alertness to the significance of these productions of the pupil the teacher will gain not only in understanding of the child but also in being able to plan more effectively for his wholesome growth.<sup>34</sup> p. 130.

#### *Studies at Northwestern University*

In 1939 Witty and Kopel reported that fully fifty per cent of poor readers displayed emotional problems.<sup>35</sup> About the same time several other investigations at Northwestern University yielded corroborative data. For example, Milton J. Cohler, in a Ph. D. study of two groups of gifted pupils, found that emotional problems were slightly more prevalent in gifted pupils who were not doing school work in accord with their ability. On the other hand, gifted pupils who were more successful in school work displayed somewhat greater poise and emotional stability.<sup>36</sup>

In June 1947, the writer described a group of 100 poor readers.<sup>37</sup> Forty-two per cent of these high school students showed the following types of emotional disturbance: nervous and excitable behavior; slow, indifferent, and recalcitrant reactions; and timidity and withdrawal tendencies. In this group, aggressive behavior and marked fears were also noted.

Further analysis of the cases used in the above study revealed that about one-third of these pupils experienced failure or unhappiness in the early primary grades.

Forty per cent of the pupils came from homes in which unfavorable relationships prevailed. Quarreling, criticism, indifference, and unfortunate comparisons of brothers and sisters occurred frequently in these homes. Such conditions contributed to the development of marked feelings of inferiority, and other symptoms of personality disorder.

Another recently completed unpublished study of poor readers yielded somewhat similar results.<sup>38</sup> In fifty-two per cent of a group of 100 poor readers in grades 3-9 referred to the Psycho-Educational Clinic, emotional problems were reported. Case-studies revealed these reactions and tendencies in the following order of frequency: nervous, excitable, erratic behavior; timidity, withdrawal, self-conscious behavior; indifference or recalcitrance; and aggressive, bold conduct. Tensions, associated with physical reactions such as nail biting, tics, or stuttering appeared next in the list.

<sup>34</sup>Bell, J. E. "Emotional Factors in the Treatment of Reading Difficulties." *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, Vol. IX, No. 3 (May-June 1945), pp. 128-131.

<sup>35</sup>Witty, Paul A. and Kopel, David. *Reading and the Educative Process*. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1939.

<sup>36</sup>Cohler, Milton J. *A Comparative Study of Achievers and Non-Achievers of Superior Intelligence*. Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1940.

<sup>37</sup>Witty, Paul. "Reading Retardation in the Secondary School." *Journal of Experimental Education*, Vol. XV, No. 4 (June 1947), pp. 314-317. Cf. also Witty, Paul. *Reading in Modern Education*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1949.

<sup>38</sup>Witty, Paul. *Reading Retardation and Personality Adjustment*. (Unpublished manuscript).

Attention should be directed to the fact that forty-four per cent of this group came from homes wherein unfavorable conditions were found. Anxiety or aggression toward parents was expressed by ten per cent of these poor readers; while conflict with brothers and sisters was reported by twenty-two per cent of this group. And twenty per cent indicated a dislike for or hostility toward their peers. Twenty-eight per cent stated that unfortunate experiences in the primary grades contributed to their failure. Definite aggression toward first grade teachers was expressed by several pupils.

Another Northwestern University study is of interest. Delwyn G. Schubert completed recently a study of 368 ninth grade pupils.<sup>39</sup> He selected twenty-five poor readers and matched them with twenty-five efficient readers. The following conclusions were reached:

Slight tendencies (all of which were discernible but not statistically significant) for reading retardation to be associated with such things as the presence of a foreign language in the home, poorer cultural background, poorer socio-economic status, a high incidence of childhood diseases, etc., substantiate the belief that reading retardation is explainable only in terms of multiple causation. No single cause is sufficiently potent to exemplify itself markedly when mean trends are studied. For example, in one case retardation may stem primarily from the presence of a foreign language in the home; in another, the presence of a foreign language in the home may prove ineffectual because of a matrix of other factors of varying strengths. Obviously, there is no single formula which one can apply to detect potential retarded readers. Each child is an individual whose very uniqueness determines the factors which may impede his reading progress. This points unmistakably to the necessity for

studying the individual child in order to determine his unique needs in light of those factors prejudicial to his reading progress.

The importance of interest cannot be overemphasized. Retarded readers do less reading than advanced readers and more often have an antipathy for the activity. One need make no attempt to penetrate the etiological riddle for evidence highlighting the interest factor as a primary cause of, or the product of reading retardation. Most important — it is almost always present. And once a distaste for reading is established it will invariably constitute an obstacle to further progress.

#### *Responses on the Interest Inventory*

The studies at Northwestern University have sought to disclose the relationship of pupil response on an interest inventory to reading and personality problems. In 1939, Witty and Kopel called attention to the differences between good and poor readers in their responses regarding play activities, wishes, fears, and attitudes toward reading.<sup>40</sup> It was pointed out that poor readers as a group engaged in fewer activities than did a control group of effective readers. The number of play activities was fifty for the control group and thirty-seven for the poor readers. Moreover, the activities of the poor reader were relatively immature in nature. The poor readers showed a higher frequency of fears and their wishes, too, clearly differentiated them from the control group. Their fears related to parents' attitude, to sibling or peer relationships, and to failing marks.

<sup>39</sup>Schubert, Delwyn G. *A Comparative Study of Advanced and Retarded Ninth Grade Readers*. Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1950.

<sup>40</sup>Witty, Paul A. and Kopel, David. *Reading and the Educative Process*. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1939.

Other distinguishing characteristics of the poor readers appeared in certain attitudes. These attitudes were consistently revealed in the 1939 studies by Witty and Kopel as well as in the later unpublished study made at Northwestern University.<sup>41</sup> In the latter, sixty-six per cent of the poor readers disliked school or were indifferent pupils. The most disliked school subject was reading in forty-two per cent of the cases.

Twenty-eight per cent of this group expressed a feeling that the first grades or early primary grades contributed to their failure. Several of these pupils commented on the role of the teacher in determining their success or failure in learning to read. Bell points to the importance of the pupil's reaction to his first grade teacher:

If the emotional attitude of the boy is complicated by disorders in his development, so that he has not worked through to clearly-defined patterns of adjustment in the first few years of life, or has developed patterns which represent neurotic adjustments, such as over-identification with the mother, or over-aggression to the father, or over-submission to the father, we may get increased internal conflict arising out of the emotional relationship with the teacher, and the intensification of problems when the teacher prescribes identification with herself.<sup>42</sup> p. 128

The character of reading materials was found to be associated with the pupil's attitude toward reading. Several pupils who reported a dislike for reading indicated that highly repetitious content was especially distasteful. Excessive use of tedious drills on uninteresting content was also mentioned as contributing to the development of, dislike for, or indifference toward reading. Although the materials

and methods employed are factors of significance in determining the pupil's success or failure, these factors appear to be secondary to the relationship established between the teacher and the pupil. George D. Spache writes:

The guiding theory and the remedial materials are secondary to the relationship between the pupil and his teacher. In any successful remedial teaching, this relationship must take the form of extending sympathy and help, of encouraging self-confidence and recognition of gradually increasing skill, and of helping the individual to recognize and reach the goals and self-concepts he has evolved regarding himself.<sup>43</sup> pp. 73-74.

#### *Summary and Concluding Statement*

In an effort to determine the relationship between reading problems and emotional disorders the writer has examined the scientific studies on this topic. Some investigators question the claim that poor readers invariably or even generally display emotional maladjustment. On the other hand, writers of many recently published accounts assert that personality disorder usually characterizes the poor reader. Moreover, some writers insist that no child can be a serious reading problem without at the same time presenting emotional disturbances.

The evidence reviewed includes a number of recently made case-studies by analysts, educators, and physicians which

<sup>41</sup>Witty, Paul. *Reading Retardation and Personality Adjustment*. (Unpublished manuscript).

<sup>42</sup>Bell, J. E. *op. cit.*, p. 128.

<sup>43</sup>Spache, George D. "The 24 Questions on High School Reading Problems." Questions compiled by Frances Triggs. Answers by Robert M. Bear, Ivan A. Booker, George D. Spache, and Arthur E. Traxler. *The Clearing House*, Vol. XXIV, No. 2 (October 1949), pp. 67-74.



have led to the conclusion that poor readers should be treated as problems in emotional adjustment. Although this evidence is impressive, it should be pointed out that other investigators, utilizing the case-study techniques, stress the theory of multiple causation and warn against generalizations concerning the significance of any single factor in causing poor reading.

Comparisons of groups of retarded readers and of successful readers lend support to the theory that emotional difficulties are found more frequently in the retarded than in the successful groups. These recent studies seem to warrant recommendation that in treating poor readers increased attention be given to emotional factors, home conditions, family relationships, and attitudes toward reading.

Studies of individuals over rather long periods of time lend support to the conclusion that emotional problems characterize many poor readers and contribute to their maladjustment. These studies do not invariably support the thesis that poor readers always or even generally show emotional disturbances and personality disorders.

Support for the thesis that the poor reader should be treated as an emotional problem has accumulated from remedial work in which emotional therapy has been employed. In fact, several investigators start remedial work on the assumption that the failure in reading is a symptom of personality disorder. The results of this work are also impressive. On the other hand, remedial reading programs, developed without recourse to any particular form of emotional therapy have also proved helpful in alleviating emotional dis-

turbances as well as improving reading ability.

Special attention has been given in this paper to studies made at Northwestern University which aimed to ascertain the relationship of poor reading to personality adjustment. It was found that approximately fifty per cent of a group of 100 very poor readers in grades 3-6 showed personality problems. Similar results were secured in a study of 100 secondary school pupils referred as poor readers to the Psycho-Educational Clinic of Northwestern University. Forty-two per cent of these secondary school pupils showed the following types of emotional disturbances: nervous and excitable behavior; slow, indifferent and recalcitrant reactions; and timidity and withdrawal tendencies.

Case studies of another group of 100 pupils in grades 3-9 referred to the Clinic as reading problems revealed that 52 per cent were afflicted by emotional disturbance. Forty-four per cent of these pupils came from homes in which quarreling, criticism, indifference, and unfavorable sibling comparisons occurred. Ten per cent of the poor readers reported aggression toward their parents, while twenty-two per cent indicated conflicts with brothers or sisters. Expression of dislike for or hostility toward peers occurred among twenty per cent of the group. More than one-fourth of these pupils stated that lack of success in the primary grades undoubtedly contributed to their inability to read.\*

Lack of interest in or indifference toward reading characterized most of the

\*The significance of some of these reports is difficult to estimate since control groups were not employed.

pupils in the three groups of poor readers. Many of these pupils reported also that they disliked reading, while others expressed an indifference toward this activity. In another study of equated groups of poor readers and efficient readers in the secondary school, lack of interest in reading appeared to be the most significant single differentiating trait.

The complexity of the problem of reading retardation is further shown by an analysis of the responses of poor readers on an interest inventory. These responses differentiated the good readers from the poor readers. The play activities of the 100 poor readers from the elementary school were fewer and more immature than those of unselected children. The poor readers showed a higher frequency of fears. And their wishes also differed from those of the typical pupil. The poor readers reported wishes related to success in school almost three times more frequently than the unselected group. Expressions of anxiety or apprehension concerning school occasionally accompanied such statements.

All the foregoing reactions reflect the dissatisfactions, frustrations, anxieties, and insecurities which the poor reader may experience. However, it should be kept in mind that only about half of the poor readers in these groups were classified as cases of emotional maladjustment. It should be pointed out, too, that emotional problems can not be regarded in any case as solely responsible for reading failure. Accordingly, these findings do not warrant the assumption that the poor reader is invariably a problem in personality adjustment for whom emotional therapy should be provided.

These studies demonstrate the importance of understanding the complex nature and needs of each child. This will include a knowledge of the child's developmental history including facts about his physical, mental, and educational development. Data concerning the child's emotional status, his interests, his attitudes, and his home background will, of course, be needed. How can the classroom teacher proceed to obtain this vital information? The following approaches are practical for classroom use. The anecdotal method yields data of value in revealing the emotional status of the child. Another procedure readily used by the classroom teacher involves use of the Northwestern University Interest Inventory.<sup>44</sup> This inventory includes inquiries concerning play activities, hobbies, wishes, fears, and dreams. Attitudes toward the school and the teacher are also revealed in the responses of the pupil to certain questions. Through the use of the inventory, the teacher may gain a better understanding of the child's attitudes and of his emotional status and needs.

To offer help for poor readers, the teacher should know also the home conditions of each child and the character of his relationships with his parents and siblings. Such information may be obtained through use of Form V of the Northwestern University Reading Record. This knowledge is particularly valuable for the teacher in the primary grades in order that the child's first reading experiences may be successful. The studies reviewed in this paper suggest the significance in

<sup>44</sup>The Witty-Kopel-Coomer Interest Inventories may be secured from The Psycho-Educational Clinic, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

successful reading of wholesome classroom atmosphere and favorable teacher-pupil relationship. The teacher should be concerned with the child's reaction to her own personality and to the nature and extent of interaction. It is clear, too, that reading should be associated closely with each child's interests in order that the experience may be meaningful and may be recognized as worthwhile.

Perhaps the most important single point which should be emphasized in this paper is the importance of preventing reading failure as well as many emotional problems. This can most effectively be accomplished by providing successful first experiences in reading, by fostering the enjoyment of the reading process as well as the results, and by providing a desirable classroom atmosphere and a sympathetic teacher-pupil relationship. Of course, reading difficulties, when they do arise, should be identified early and given systematic treatment. It should be recognized, however, that as children mature, reading problems become more difficult to reduce or eliminate and emotional disorders become more obstinate and deep-rooted. One writer concludes:

I do not think there is much you can do for the non-reader who has reached the age of twelve. By that time his associates are interested in things far more exciting than learning to read and so is he. . . . His feeling of defeat is something he has learned to live with by that time.<sup>45</sup>

Remedial programs show clearly that much can be accomplished for poor readers at all ages. But the problem is more difficult with older than with younger pupils. We should direct our efforts toward the provision of efficient developmental programs so as to enable pupils to succeed and to enjoy the process and the results of reading. When such programs are unsuccessful, early identification and treatment should be provided in accord with each child's needs. As Gellerman states:

. . . reading difficulties are cumulative; the longer they are allowed to go uncorrected, the more serious they become. Moreover, when retardations are quickly and capably investigated, restoration of achievement level to capacity level, . . . is entirely possible.<sup>46</sup> p. 530.

<sup>45</sup>Catline, Opal. "A School Nurse Studies Non-Readers." *Illinois Education*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2 (October 1949), pp. 53 and 69-70.

<sup>46</sup>Gellerman, Saul W. "Causal Factors in the Reading Difficulties of Elementary-School Children." *The Elementary School Journal*, Vol. XLIX, Nos. 9-10 (May-June 1949), pp. 523-530.

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# Language Plays A Role

GEORGE AND FANNIE SHAFTEL<sup>1</sup>

The teacher stopped reading. There was a taut silence.

A boy asked incredulously, "Is that *all*?"

The teacher said, "I told you that this story stops, but is not finished. You can finish it yourselves. What would *you* do if you were Steve in this story?"

"I don't care! I think Steve's mother wasn't fair!"

"I'd run away from home."

"Danny should be punished!"

From all sides of the classroom came comments and outbursts of feeling. During the reading of the story the children had groaned, gasped, and even commented aloud as the boy in the narrative had gone from one difficulty into a greater one. A visitor in the room would have felt a tenseness, a quality of emotion in the situation which is not typical of usual classroom sessions. This emotional climate would have been further demonstrated as various members of the class undertook to act out solutions to Steve's dilemma—to attempt, through spontaneous dramatization, sociodrama, to resolve Steve's problem.

The children were frank and free with their comments. In the action periods, when different children undertook the various roles in the story, they seemed unaware of the audience, completely unself-conscious.

Was this true because the class was one especially experienced in this sociodramatic procedure? Emphatically not.

The reactions described in the previous paragraphs were characteristic of numerous classrooms in which certain experimental materials have been tried out.

Children in schools in Orange County, California, in San Francisco, in Detroit, rural communities in Missouri, have been equally concerned and responsive when these experimental stories were read to them because the narratives dealt with crucial life situations of boys and girls *everywhere*.

Children will use language with impulsive fire, with imagination, with wholehearted vehemence, if they are impelled into expression about matters which are actually and immediately vital to them.

Granting this, what then are such matters?

And how impel youngsters into talking (or writing) about them?

The matters of special concern to children are the daily problems they meet in the job of growing up. Ability to handle their troubles must be acquired. Young people, at each stage of their development, face a series of common developmental tasks.

A list of these developmental tasks has the repelling character of any list of abstractions, of course; but, actually, categories can be a helpful device. Almost any problem faced by a child, no matter how special and unique that he may feel it is while he's grappling with it personally.

<sup>1</sup>School of Education, Stanford University.

ally, has happened to untold other children. A list of developmental tasks, such as the following, will encompass most of the difficulties which confront children in the middle and upper grades of the elementary school.

- 1.) Learning to care for one's person.  
Dress, hygiene, health, safety, etc.
- 2.) Developing physical skills necessary for games.
- 3.) Learning a sex role.
- 4.) Achieving secure relations with other people:  
becoming at ease with adults,  
learning to get along with age-mates,  
developing friendships and affectionate relationships.
- 5.) Learning the basic intellectual skills necessary for everyday life: reading, writing, arithmetic, etc.
- 6.) Developing concepts necessary for living: of time, space, man's need for ways of earning a living, etc.
- 7.) Developing fair-mindedness and responsibility—building conscience and a scale of values,  
being intellectually honest,  
preserving integrity in human relationships,  
modifying personal desires in the interests of others,  
respecting the unique abilities and background of each individual,  
learning to meet legal regulations,  
deciding upon obligations to constituted authorities.

- 8.) Developing attitudes toward social groups and institutions—toward race, religion, school, government, nation, etc.;  
reacting toward group mores, customs, etc.

9.) Self-reliance:

learning to control emotions,  
learning wholesome attitudes toward oneself as a physical organism,  
achieving self-direction—an increasing independence from parents,  
adjusting to personal strengths and weaknesses—physical, physiological, intellectual, and emotional,  
dealing with success and failure,  
making choices and resolving conflict situations.<sup>2</sup>

A child in trouble is usually a child who has failed to make growth in one or more of these developmental tasks. It may be helpful to consider examples:

A boy has begged his mother to buy him an air rifle like the one owned by a boy across the street. The mother has refused. Now the boy finds her purse lying open on the bureau, several five dollar bills in plain sight. If he takes money from her purse, he is of course showing lack of self-reliance and of responsibility. (No. 7 and No. 9 in the list above.)

<sup>2</sup>Based upon "Developing a Curriculum for Modern Living," Stratemeyer, Forkner, McKim, etc. Chapter V; "Developmental Tasks and General Education," R. J. Havighurst, mimeograph script; "Pre-Adolescents — their Needs and Characteristics," in *You* (Teachers Edition) Helen Schacter and W. W. Bauer.



All the girls in a 5th grade class are invited to a swimming party at the home of a very popular girl—except one child. Perhaps the uninvited girl is new, or she's colored, or her parents are migrant farm workers living in a rough shack on the edge of town. Unless she has made unusual growth in self-reliance (No. 9) she is going to suffer intensely. If she could be persuaded to unburden her heart on the matter she would have eloquent words to speak. . . . This situation has its converse side: suppose the popular girl were asked why she has not invited the rejected child to the party. The popular girl might answer with outrage, with cool, disdainful rationalization, or with conscience-stricken regret. She would have to use language to justify an action which brings serious criticism upon her.

A boy has climbed up into a parked truck and played with the controls. The emergency brake was loosened, and the truck has jumped the curb and crashed into the side of a house, doing considerable damage. The youngster, naturally, has run home and is in a state of quivering fear.

At the dinner table his father remarks that the driver of Larsen's truck will likely lose his job for not parking properly when delivering groceries next door: the truck started rolling and caved in the side of McLane's house.

The boy is torn between conscience and fear of punishment. If his sense of responsibility is keen enough he will reveal that he is to blame. But if he is so lacking in self-reliance that he cannot face the punishment which he knows will be his portion, then he will keep silent.

Every child can recall, with pain, such dilemmas in which he was torn between conscience and fear. And this fact, if capitalized upon, can be a most effective tool for the teacher in guiding children into real growth in the use of language for their own social-personal development.

If we take various life problems of children and play them out in the classroom, using the technics of sociodrama (which is simply dramatic play focused on human relations) we bring to the children a procedure that will help them *explore their feelings about the situations in life which most fundamentally shape their attitudes and values*. We can bridge the artificial barrier of the classroom walls and bring the typical problems of the family, the neighborhood, and playground into the classroom where children can work on them and resolve them with the help of the group and the teacher.

For the past several years the School of Education at Stanford University has been carrying on an investigation and research into the teaching of American ideals. Those of us responsible for the elementary level study felt that we could not "teach" American ideals. Ideals are generalizations projected ahead by individuals on the basis of their past experiences. We felt that the best way to promote the development of democratic American ideals was to work with the attitudes and values expressed by the children in the solution of their own life situations.

A study was made of the developmental tasks of later childhood and of critical conflict situations of ten-and eleven-year-olds as found in the literature of child

development. Stories that dramatized the developmental tasks of later childhood were then written. Each story was structured to bring a problem to a climax, but not to solve its peak dilemma. In classroom use, the teacher read the story dramatically to the children, warning them that the narrative stopped but was not finished. When the teacher ceased reading, the pupils were invited to act out whatever solutions to the story that they wished. Each proposed solution was discussed and explored for consequences to the people involved, aptness of solution, etc.

This procedure enabled the children to *practice* ways of dealing with their problems; gave them opportunity to explore the consequences of various choices and, under the more mature guidance of the teacher, to learn to consider the feelings of others when choosing from among alternatives for action.

In this spontaneous dramatization (role-playing, or sociodrama, as it is variously called) pupils can be permitted to make a wrong choice and find out for themselves that it is not satisfactory. Since they are only practicing, they can back up on that choice when it proves inadequate or undesirable, and try another solution.

An important element in sociodrama is the procedure of going into action immediately, without much discussion or planning. The first acting of roles is therefore impulsive and spontaneous, and reveals how the pupils really feel about the problem involved rather than how they think adults *want* them to feel and act. Too often children give adults answers which the children surmise (with such

keen intuition!) that adults want to hear, and keep their own feelings and convictions hidden. If we are to help pupils to modify attitudes, we must first get the youngsters to frankly reveal what they would do in a problem situation. Then we have something to work with; then the class and the teacher can explore together, through discussion and problem-solving procedures, the consequences of the various suggestions for action offered.

The teacher always assumes a non-condemning, permissive attitude, accepting *all* solutions for objective evaluation, even socially unacceptable ones.

In our work on the American Ideals Project two facts about our experimental materials and procedures came home to us vividly: one, our children enjoyed unrehearsed dramatics, were eager for it, couldn't get enough of it, and kept asking for more; and, two, dramatic stories based upon the developmental tasks provided an intense launching impetus for heated and effective expression.

We found that children were quick to apply generalizations they drew from discussion about stories to their own life situations. After the children had worked on a sociodrama problem, the teacher would ask, "Has anything like this ever happened to you?" Almost invariably we got a deluge of personal examples.

The result was that the teacher had helped her pupils to express their feelings about troubles which had caused them some anguish, which of itself has cathartic value; furthermore, she had guided them into describing the ways in which they had solved their dilemmas, which gave the whole class actual incidents to

examine and dissect and evaluate. After discussing these personal examples, the teacher would ask if the children would solve the problems they described in the same way, *now*, as they had at the time the incidents happened.

Illustrative of the typical life-situations used as the basis for the problem stories written for the American Ideals Project are the following samples:

- 1.) Two boys, playing, cause damage to a car. One youngster lies to his father, letting blame fall upon the other boy.
- 2.) A boy earns money with the intention of contributing his share to a club being formed by his friends. His father, however, insists that he must bank all but a small portion of his earnings. The boy tells his friends, and they threaten to exclude him from the club unless he pays his share.
- 3.) A boy is imposed upon by a girl, who takes advantage of adult notions of what is gentlemanly and chivalrous.
- 4.) A boy ignores regulations set down for the safety of a camp group, and in consequence several youngsters are put in serious danger.
- 5.) A girl, infuriated because her parents buy her sister a new party dress after refusing to buy one for her, ruins the sister's dress.
- 6.) Three boys are invited to be guests at a very fine summer camp. The inviter, when he learns that one boy is Jewish, offers him a new bicycle instead of the two weeks at camp.
- 7.) Because his clothes are different, and his speech meticulous, and he lacks game skills, a boy is alternately teased and ignored at school.
- 8.) A girl, who has unusual musical

talent, is given opportunity by her parents at the expense of her younger brother and sister.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate the acutely sensitive responsiveness of children to problems involving their own developmental tasks would be to review in condensed form a typical problem-story session:

Teacher: How many of you children have younger brothers and sisters?

(Groans from the class.)

Teacher: Do you have to take care of them when your mother goes away?

(VARIED COMMENTS OF ASSENT, AND DISLIKE OF THE JOB.)

Teacher: I have a story about a boy named Steve who had to take care of his younger brother, Danny. Trying to do that, and to keep up with his own affairs, got Steve into trouble. I wonder if anything like this has ever happened to you?  
Now, this story I'm going to read stops, but is not finished. Perhaps you can act out a finish to it, yourselves.

(The teacher then read the story *KID BROTHER*. This is a story about an eleven-year-old, Steve, who has to hurry home after school to take care of young brother Danny, aged six, while their mother is away at her club meetings. Because Steve wants to be at school for play rehearsal, one day, and to attend a model air meet, another time, he gets into difficulty with his child-care responsibilities. Danny finally provokes Steve into striking him. Later, when Danny falls ill—from an ear infection which had been neglected—Steve is blamed by his parents.)

(Teacher finishes the reading.)

Pupil: Is that *all*?

Teacher: Yes.

Pupils: Oh!

Pupil: I don't think it's Steve's fault!

Pupil: If the mother hadn't been so busy it wouldn't have happened.

Pupil: I'd have tied Danny to a tree!

Pupil: I don't think Steve should have been put in charge of Danny. Steve was only eleven, and he doesn't think as well as twelve-and thirteen-year-olds. (This was a 7th grade class!)

Pupil: I know how Steve felt. My brother upset my model planes once.

Pupil: Steve was the fall guy.

Teacher: You come up here and we'll have Steve before our eyes. What will happen when his dad comes home?

(Groans from the class.)

Pupil: Miss C., the same thing happened to me. My sister—

(She relates her own experience)

Teacher: What will Mr. Blake do? What kind of a man is he?

Pupil: He acts before he thinks.

(Teacher invites this boy up to assume the role of Mr. Blake.)

Teacher: What about Mrs. Blake?

Pupil: She fusses over Danny.

(Teacher invites this girl to take the role. There were now excited murmurs throughout the group.)

Pupil: Who is playing Danny?

(A boy is selected. Children taking roles then went out into the hall to plan their enactment very briefly.)

Teacher: While they're getting ready, children, let's consider our part in this. Each of you can help by thinking of what *you* would do in the same situation. After the group that is playing has finished, you may have other suggestions for the way the ending should have gone. Now, how about Danny?

Pupil: Danny thinks he's worse when his mother babys him.

Pupil: This has been happening for years!

(The role-takers return.)

Teacher: How shall we set the room?

(*Children manipulate chairs and tables for a livingroom scene.*)

The Sociodrama — I

Father: Steve! What happened to Danny?

Where is Danny?

Mother: Steve hit him.

Father: What was the idea?

Steve: He got on my nerves.

Father: Why didn't you take better care of him? Can't you watch the guy?

Steve: How many eyes have I got in my head? (*Teacher breaks in*)

Teacher: What is the mother doing all this time?

(*There is discussion of the mother-role and another girl is assigned.*)

Teacher: How is Steve feeling right now?

Pupil: He feels mad at the world.

Pupil: I imagine he feels like he's stuffed in a bottle with the top on!

Teacher: Why don't you play Steve?

The Sociodrama — II.

Father: You should take better care of him, Steve.

Mother: He's always doing things to Danny.

Steve: (to Mother) *You* should take care of him!

Father: He's got something there!

(*Class nods approval.*)

Steve: Why doesn't Mother stay home?

Father: She needs some entertainment, too.

(*The doctor comes in and reports that Danny has an ear infection which has been neglected for days.*)

Father: I don't know how to settle this.

(*A pupil breaks in.*)

Pupil: I've got an idea.

(*The teacher calls on the pupil who interrupted the sociodrama.*)

Teacher: All right, tell us.

Pupil: Steve should share his bantam eggs with Danny. That would give Danny something to do.



*(The class talks this over. They are all agreed that Danny must be kept busy. After several further enactments the teacher stops the sociodrama.)*

Teacher: What's the trouble in this house?

Pupil: Danny needs playmates of his own age.

Teacher: Is the mother a nice person?

Pupil: To her friends rather than to her children.

Teacher: Does she like Danny better than Steve?

Pupil: I think she likes both.

Pupil: But she doesn't realize that Steve needs to be with his friends.

Pupil: I think it's a rotten deal. The old lady does as she pleases!

Pupil: Neither the father or mother love their children enough!

Pupil: It's always the older kid's fault.

Pupil: Because Danny's so young, he can't be wrong!

*(This ended the session for that day. It is interesting to note that the child who played Steve has a younger brother and always gets blamed for things. His identification with Steve probably was psychodramatic. . . . This session took fifty minutes. The teacher was not satisfied with the results and followed it up the next day.)*

Teacher: All day long, yesterday, I kept hearing, "Couldn't we have some more of this family?"

Pupils: Oh, yes!

Pupil: The mother should take better care of her family.

Teacher: Let's list some of the solutions we worked out.

*(Teacher writes children's suggestions on the blackboard:)*

1. Mother should take care of Danny.
2. Father should think before acting.
3. Danny should have playmates, pets, hobby.
4. Pay as much attention to Steve as to Danny.

5. Don't pamper Danny.

6. Teach the children to leave each other's things alone.

Teacher: Think for a minute; look at these suggestions. Which is best? Then, let's think of the people involved.

*(There is discussion of the various members of the family.)*

Teacher: How did this problem come about?

Pupil: Danny was not minding.

Pupil: The mother was away so much that the little brother was not brought up right.

Pupil: The mother was away so much she didn't know Danny was sick.

Teacher: We have to find a solution that makes it possible for this family to be happy.

Pupil: The mother didn't really care, except what society thought.

Teacher: What do you have to consider in order to solve this problem?

Pupil: This family should go on a vacation together to get better acquainted. There is too much routine here.

Pupil: The mother needs some entertainment, too.

Teacher: Let's put some of this down. What else would help?

Pupil: Have the old man play with his kids — not just come home and read the paper!

*(Teacher records the suggestions on the board.)*

Pupil: Admit it when you're wrong.

Teacher: What do you mean?

Pupil: When the father found out it was poison oak, he could have been a better sport.

Pupil: They ought to all work together.

Pupil: Like the people in our house.

Teacher: Let's look at this list and apply the suggestions to this family.

Pupil: I've got another one — don't tie down Steve.

Pupil: Give Danny some responsibility.

Teacher: I think you've done well. Look up at these suggestions. Think how they will affect each member of the family.

Pupil: That would be the *ideal* family!

Teacher: You mean that that isn't what really happens?

Pupil: Yeah!

Teacher: Could it happen?

Pupil: It could.

Pupil: Once in a while you get on each other's nerves.

Pupil: I fixed my brother for fooling around. I gave him a bloody nose!

Teacher: Do you think you have a satisfactory solution for this family now?

Pupil: When somebody gets nervous, take them out some place. That's what my dad does for my mom.

Pupil: Don't hold grudges.

Pupil: Every family has an argument once in a while.

Pupil: We need recreation for parents.

Pupil: When trouble does arrive, the whole family should talk it over.

Several pupils: I thing we're going too far!

Pupil: No family can do all that!

Pupil: You'd be surprised!

Pupil: I can sum it up — not so much responsibility for Steve and more for Danny.

Pupil: Don't let anyone say anything until they've all stopped being mad.

Teacher: What do you think now? Are you ready to act out this family?

These children performed seven different sociodrama sessions exploring this problem. At one time or another, either in discussion or role-playing, every child in the room was verbally involved. (This record would, of course, have more meaning to the reader if the whole story of kid brother could have been reprinted here.)

Over and over again, in these problem-story sessions, children reveal their pre-

occupation with their developmental tasks. For example, in a story in which a boy is overpaid five dollars when delivering medicines for a druggist—money which the boy needs urgently because he has not yet paid his share in a boat which he and his friends have bought—class after class have solved the hero's dilemma by having him use this money to pay the club first (loyalty to the peer group) and suggesting that *later, somehow*, he will find a way to return the money to the cheated customer.

Another of our stories is about a boy who lies, out of fear of the severe punishment he expects from his father for a breach of rules, and thereby throws blame on another boy. In every class which has played sociodramas to this problem there has been someone who says, "If you've lied, stick to your story." Nearly always, when this point is made, other children will hasten to say, "But it doesn't work! One lie leads to another, and then where are you?" Or, "Even if you get away with it, you don't feel good inside."

We have a camp story in which all the boys are to be deprived of week-end privileges unless a culprit confesses to a misdeed. Dealing with this situation, the children choose *not* to tattle, even though they know who is guilty. The peer code against tattlers is strong!

We have found that the problem of telling "white lies" because you hear grown-ups tell them precipitates very serious discussions in which the girls reveal their advanced maturity over boys. The girls are intensely interested in the adult

code, while the boys are more interested in fair play in sports.

Over and over classes have expressed the feeling that adults are often unfair; that they don't *listen* to children; that adults make one code for themselves and another for boys and girls.

Classroom experiences with these experimental materials have reminded us, over and over again, that children go through many struggles in the process of growing up. Mowrer and Kluckhohn have said "—childhood must be viewed realistically as a period of recurring crises and problem-solving dilemmas."<sup>3</sup> Teachers have told us that the sociodramatic approach to children's problems have given them new insight into their children's anxieties, their values, their attitudes toward human relations.

The very young child learns early that language is a key to adult attention. From those howls of pain and outrage which bring the young mother running to the toddler, to the deliberate use of "bad" language as an attention-getter, the pre-school child demonstrates his awareness of language as a social tool. The kindergarten child soon learns not to snatch a toy from another child but rather to persuade the other boy to trade with a beguiling "Look what I have!"

In later childhood and adolescence, when status with his peers is so vital to

the youngster, in addition to physical skills a boy will need deftness of expression to win prestige in his group. Never again in his life will repartee be so important a social asset. "Drop dead!". . . "What, and look like you!" Increasingly, too, his ability to do school work, and his progress academically, will be conditioned by his capacity to grow in the use of language.

As we trace the crises and problem-solving dilemmas of childhood and early adolescence, we see language in action; we see that language development and child development are interwoven processes.

When children are guided to explore the problems inherent in their own developmental tasks, they learn (1) to use language to share experiences vital to them, (2) to express feelings so that others may understand and sympathize (3) to define problems and consider the consequences of alternative solutions, and (4) to generalize from these explorations for future action. Their generalizations are all the more meaningful and influential upon behavior because they have been developed by each child in the company of, and with the cooperation or opposition, of other children.

<sup>3</sup>O. H. Mowrer and C. Kluckhohn, "Dynamic Theory of Personality," in *Personality and the Behavior Disorders*, p. 103, By J. M. Hunt (ed.) New York: Ronald Press, N. Y., 1944.

# Giving Spelling Life

HERMAN O. MAKEY<sup>1</sup>

Most spelling instruction is based upon the theory that there is some list of words which the pupils should learn to spell and that they will learn to spell these words by memorizing the letters of the words in the order in which those letters appear in the words. In a study made by Ayres almost half a century ago, it was discovered that a certain thousand words made up somewhat over 90 per cent of the words which appear in ordinary writing; but it is not certain that the same proportion would be true for this list today. Besides, the proportion of words is not constant but varies with the subject matter, the writer, and the reader to whom they are directed. Nevertheless, there is a definite core of vocabulary, including the most common verbs and verb forms; nearly all the prepositions, the conjunctions, and the pronouns; and a number of nouns, adjectives, and adverbs.

It would seem, as was supposed by those who made use of the Ayres list, that, by teaching the most common words, spelling could be greatly improved, since fewer than ten words in any thousand would then be misspelled—fewer than three to any ordinary page of typing. This leaves out of consideration, however, the idiosyncracies and interests of the writer. If the writer lacks initiative, imagination, and interests, he may use hardly a word outside the one thousand most common words. If he has a hobby or if he has thoughts that stray out of the common rut, he may use many other

words. (Check, for instance, a page of Victor Hugo.) Besides, the thousand most common words were almost entirely basic words, whereas the greatest number of errors are made when affixes are added.

Can spelling be taught effectively by sheer memorization? Some people have photographic memory and can recognize words by their appearance. Such people frequently recognize misspellings because the words do not look natural. The spelling of words in a textbook (a spelling textbook) is a simple problem for such people. The English vocabulary, however, is large; and many words are very much alike. Besides, words do not look the same in context as in isolation. Even those with photographic memories are likely to become confused.

It is easy to demonstrate, moreover, that the ability to spell a list of words memorized for a spelling lesson on Monday will not guarantee that the same pupils will correctly spell the same words on Tuesday—if the pupil has not been warned that this will be expected. Besides, if a grade of 70, for instance, is considered passing, the pupil is often able to achieve this grade without study and without improving his spelling. So the question naturally comes to the teacher, *How can spelling be made a permanent possession?* The teacher may even ask herself, *Can spelling be made educative?*

There is considerable doubt whether the hundred or two hundred most common

<sup>1</sup>South Side High School, Fort Wayne, Indiana.



words—perhaps the five hundred most common words—are learned by studying them as spelling words or by observation of the words in reading and by use in writing. It seems quite likely that they can best be learned in exercises in the writing class.

The great majority of common English words are written exactly as they are pronounced; so a study of sounds and practice in pronunciation will enable the student to spell the great majority of common words without further study. A good many years ago, I took over a grade school spelling class which was held on the same floor as the high school classes I was teaching. In the class was a boy who seemed unable to spell any word at all. I discovered that, if I got him to stand without support from his desk and practice speaking the words until his pronunciation of them was clear, he could spell a considerable number of words correctly. If left alone, he relaxed completely physically and mentally; and his pronunciation was so fuzzy that he had no clues to the spelling of the words. Since then, I have been able to get many pupils to spell correctly by the simple device of having them pronounce the words correctly and clearly.

Even though they habitually pronounce the words correctly, they need to have their attention directed toward the sounds—and they need to be mentally conscious of the sounds and syllables. While letters and sounds of letters may, perhaps, wisely be neglected at the *beginning* of the study of reading, a recognition of these (especially the sounds of vowels as modified by doubled consonants and final *e*) and of accent soon becomes im-

portant and, as spelling work, may become one of the most powerful aids in the mechanics of reading—word calling (which is not to be confused with the psychological problem of understanding what is read). Here, then, is the field which should be cultivated in the first stages of spelling. This will develop facility in the use of the dictionary, an important part of every child's education. Through such work, the pupil becomes able to spell, not the few hundred words in his speller, but a vastly larger number of words—in fact, all the words in his vocabulary which are spelled as they are pronounced and even some which are spelled only approximately as they are pronounced.

The next step in spelling instruction should be the study of various spellings of the same sound. The pupil should learn the variety of vowel sounds, including the changes which they take after *c* and *t* when they are followed by *a* and *o*. He should learn that *s* may be represented by *c*, *sc*, and *z* and that *s* may be sounded as *z* or may be silent. These are only a very few of the substitutes which are frequent in English words. Of course, the study of these substitutes must be accompanied by the study of the words containing these substitutes.

The use of affixes should be studied as soon as the pupils are capable of understanding these, which is very early in the case of some affixes. The knowledge that *un* and *dis*, for example, are prefixes which make no change in spelling when attached will prevent uncertainty about doubled letters in such words as *unnatural* and *unearthly* and *disappoint* and *dissatisfy*. At the same time, the meanings of

the suffixes automatically increases the potential usable vocabulary of the pupil.

The study of suffixes naturally leads to spelling rules. The addition of suffixes to words ending in silent *e* and to words ending in a single consonant following a single vowel is an easily solved problem which adds to the pupil's spelling *power* as distinct from the spelling *ability* which the study of word lists is supposed to give. Here, too, a knowledge of the meanings of suffixes gives a boost to the pupil's vocabulary. The knowledge that *ous* is an adjective ending and *us* a noun termination will prevent many errors.

There are a considerable number of words which contain an obscure vowel, making it impossible to distinguish whether *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, is being sounded. By associating simple and derivative forms of troublesome words, one may make these obscure vowels prominent. By associating *grammar* with *grammatical*, the obscure *a* is brought out of hiding. The same service is done the other obscure vowels in combinations such as *comedy*, *comedian*; *inspiration*, *inspire*; *minor*, *minority*; *autumn*, *autumnal*. In the last case, the silent consonant is also revealed. This is true in other cases, as in *bomb*, *bombard*;

*benign*, *benignant*; *condemn*, *condemnation*; *muscle*, *muscular*.

A number of spelling demons may be mastered by various mnemonic devices. For instance, it is easy to remember that a cemetery is a place of ease and, therefore, the doubtful vowels in *cemetery* are *e*'s. Since a principle is a rule of action or thought and both *rule* and *principle* end in *le*, the two spellings may easily be associated. When two spellings are confused, one should always try to get one spelling clear in mind; the other will then take care of itself, as in the confusion between *principle* and *principal*.

If such instruction is coupled with the thoughtful correction of all words actually misspelled by the pupil, he will be given the maximum spelling help of which he is capable. Most spelling errors are primarily the result of faulty observation, and these devices call attention to the words so that observation is sharpened. Almost any pupil can make 70 on a list of words given in a book, even if he does not study his lesson; but giving such tests does not teach him to spell. Words in practical use appear in sentences, not in isolation. Spelling should be *taught*; giving spelling lists does not teach.

# The New Approach to Reading

CLARA EVANS<sup>1</sup>

The ability to read is a skill so indispensable to our culture that we can hardly imagine life without it. For all the enlarged and enriched curricula of our modern schools, reading is as fundamental to the child of today as it was to the small scholar of two centuries ago poring over his hornbook.

The modern child is fortunate. Research and experimentation have made both the materials to be read and the methods by which reading is taught much pleasanter and more efficient than those through which his predecessors were forced to struggle to gain mastery of this most essential of the three R's. Teachers no longer plunge their entire class of beginners into reading, herding them through a set number of pages to be mastered in a stipulated period.

The first important factor in the small child's reading readiness is the position that books and reading in general have held in his home. If he knows that books are important to his parents, if they evidently enjoy reading and build a cultural life about it, he will take for granted that for himself, too, reading is going to be a vital activity. If his parents have responded to his demands for information and stories, have read to him and taught him verses from Mother Goose and other children's classics, he will arrive at the kindergarten with his interest in books already implanted and needing only direction and encouragement from the teacher. The emotional and cultural atmosphere of

the home is also valuable in maturing the child's vocabulary and sentence structure in daily speech, an important factor in his readiness for the reading program presented in school.

When the child enters kindergarten he should be provided with many activities which are conducive to reading readiness. The very atmosphere of the kindergarten room is important. From the outset of the school term there should be a library table well furnished with books on such subjects as travel, transportation, pets, and family as well as fairy tales and other established favorites. These should be sufficiently attractive in format and illustration to interest the child even before he can make anything of the text. The library table should stand in a secluded part of the room where the light is suitable for reading. All experiences associated with books should be pleasurable; browsing among books should give the children a feeling of restfulness and quiet freedom.

The books on the library table can be still another source of many happy moments for the children—this through hearing the teacher read aloud from them. Among the works most effective for reading aloud to small children are *Davy's Day*, *Cowboy Small* by Lois Lenski and *White Snow*, *Bright Snow* by Alvin Tresselt.

Since real fluency and ease in speech are necessary in reading readiness, the

<sup>1</sup>Assistant professor, Teachers College, the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Neb.

teacher should use every means to cultivate these abilities in the children. She should encourage them to tell of their interests at home and to make up little original accounts of school activities, or the children can tell in their own words the stories the teacher has read to them. Learning rhymes from Mother Goose and other collections of children's verse develops ease of enunciation and an ear for phrasing and rhythm. At times the children may dramatize stories which they have heard or episodes based on their own experiences. The conversation arising from such activities as the playhouse, grocery store, airplane, or market also serves to promote fluency of expression.

The teacher can make use of certain visual devices to carry the children through the transitional period during which reading readiness is developed. The children learn that phrases of a certain length and general form are representative of statements about their activities even though they do not truly read these phrases. The fact that children are conscious of predication as complete structures and do not analyze them into separate units is the psychological basis for the modern method of teaching reading by the "whole method" and its superiority over the old way of teaching by separate words unrelated to context.

The materials for the children's activities in the kindergarten should bear labels—"These are our goldfish," "We keep our blocks in this cupboard." The children then memorize these statements and know the wording of each sign. They know, too, the legends that the teacher has lettered for their pictorial posters, as when a child

draws a picture of his father and it is marked below "Steve's Daddy."

Each activity may be commemorated with a record book. The kindergarten children will wish to make a book about their work period. On one page they paste gay-colored blocks under which the teacher prints, "We like to play with blocks." Though the children cannot actually read this statement, they know what it is and that it is explanatory of their activity to those who can read. On another page they paste colored pictures of the playhouse. "We like to play in our playhouse. We can make the bed. We can set the table. We like our tea party." Another page contains pictures of the colored puzzles with a suitable caption. The children will delight in referring to this book time and again and will know the wording that belongs on each page. Throughout the year, the activities of the playhouse, the doll clinic, the grocery store, and the science table will furnish material for similar record books. Sometimes their books may be sent to the first grade. Record books are a means of security for the timid child.

The teacher should make the most of every opportunity to stimulate the children's observation and organize their thinking. She can take them on excursions to enlarge their experiences of the community. Some of the children, it is true, have probably gone to the parks and the zoo on other occasions, but they will profit by visiting these places under the teacher's guidance. One child brought out this fact when he said, "But I see better when I go with Miss Evans."

Such an excursion may give rise to a group of posters later to be bound to-



gether in a record book. Or the posters may be joined to form a long roll which, placed on a cylinder turned with handles, forms a "movie," much to the children's delight.

The same preparatory method for reading may be continued in the first grade. There is no sharp break between kindergarten and first grade. Instead, there is a period of gradual adjustment with ample allowance for individual differences in maturity. For children without the benefit of kindergarten experience this preparatory period is especially important.

We cannot name the precise age at which a child should be taught to read. Certain tests must precede the introduction of the reading program. Many writers believe that adequate vision and hearing and a mental age of six years and *six months* must be established before the process of reading readiness can be considered complete.

Children do not learn to read "all at once." Between the time of a child's first associations with books and the time when he is able to follow a printed account for himself, there is a period of growing acquaintance with some written symbols and word groupings. Children learn to read most readily when the material fulfills a concept already in their minds. Reading is not now taught as a formal subject in the old sense. Some of the old standards of achievement in reading are now recognized as excessive; a more gradual introduction to this skill is now seen to be preferable.

Reading readiness develops through a number of stages. Long before children can read for themselves they can enjoy picture books. They follow stories read

to them with an attention span of five to ten minutes, recognize the books that contain their favorites, and know that the story is told from the printed text. In consequence whoever reads to children should hold the book so that they can watch the text and the pictures. The children sense the relationship between the blocks of phrases and the inflections of the reader's voice, particularly if the print is large and the lines few to the page.

Next the children follow the wording on the charts that they have dictated. They see the connections between the groupings of print and the number of spoken words. Following the teacher's marker across the line on the chart teaches them the left-to-right movement of print, the progression in lines down the page.

In the course of this practice the children will come to recognize certain common words even when in unfamiliar context. Learning the pronunciation of these words and abandoning incorrect even though related associations come next. For a while it is enough if the children get merely the general idea of what they read; as they mature they will distinguish with more precision. Beginners have not yet formed visual habits of examining for minute detail; at first they see words as patterns, paying little attention to the distinctions between similarly shaped letters. Care should be taken that children know their concepts in stories, poems, and everything that is discussed.

The most effective reading material for children in the first grade has but few words to the page. There should be ample repetition of words and phrases. The vocabulary should be familiar to the chil-

(Continued on Page 322)

# The Library In the Elementary School Program

JEWEL GARDINER<sup>1</sup>

The U. S. Office of Education is now preparing a summary of statistics regarding school library facilities in the larger cities of the United States based on data submitted by superintendents of schools. Returns from five cities of more than a million population already show a twenty-one percent increase in centralized elementary school libraries during the past six years, and a decrease of twenty-four percent in the number of elementary schools which maintain classroom collections only.<sup>2</sup> On the surface these statistics would seem to indicate that the hopes of library-minded elementary school principals as well as school librarians are being realized to the extent that central school libraries are at last being given more attention than classroom collections. However, the organization and administration of the centralized elementary school libraries which are being established need to be examined very closely before conclusions can be made regarding their effectiveness in the school program. A typical classroom library usually consists of a few book shelves in one corner of the classroom, crowded with books. All such collections are invariably limited to a comparatively small number of books and can never provide a real library experience for children. Neither can the collections ever assume the size necessary to give wide and varied reading experiences whether for recreational reading or for the various subjects which the child studies.

Classroom libraries cannot be regarded

as representing in any sense a complete or effective type of library service for an elementary school. On the other hand, the mere establishment of a centralized library in the elementary school does not automatically provide real library experiences, and it utterly fails in performing one of its most important functions if it does not provide for the free circulation of books to and from every classroom in the school, thereby providing classroom libraries whenever they are needed for classroom activities. Unfortunately these two ideas of elementary school library service have been thrown into opposition but ideally the most successful arrangement for any modern elementary school is a combination of the two ideas—a well organized central library with carefully planned provision for circulation of books to and from classrooms. Experience shows that it is this arrangement which makes of the elementary school library a truly integrating factor in the educational program of the school.

The change in educational philosophy has quite naturally changed the philosophy of the elementary school library. When the textbook ceased to hold first place in the type of learning provided by the elementary school, the modern elementary school library came into being—a library which provides both an adequate and well-selected library. When the textbook ceased to hold first place in the type of learning provided by the elementary school, the modern elementary school library came into being—a library which provides both an adequate and well-selected library. When the textbook ceased to hold first place in the type of learning provided by the elementary school, the modern elementary school library came into being—a library which provides both an adequate and well-selected library.

<sup>1</sup>Librarian, Professional Library and Supervisor of Elementary and Junior High School Libraries, Scaramento, Cal., Unified School District.

<sup>2</sup>Beust, Nora E. "School Library Movement Growing," in *School Life*, 32: No. 2, Nov. '49, p. 30.



Primary classes borrow books from the central school library.

ed collection of books for recreational reading, and a collection of reference books and materials suitable for the curriculum of the school. It provides for individual differences through a book collection which includes books on all subjects and varying greatly in reading difficulty. It gives opportunity for children to discuss books and share their reading experiences. It provides a wide collection of supplementary books and materials for circulation to classrooms. Instruction in the use of books and libraries is a part of the planned program of library activities, so that children become skillful in using library facilities in general. Thus the library meets the needs of children and teachers. Thus it provides materials and services appropriate to the growth and development of the boys and girls as individual members of society. Thus does it help boys and girls to develop satisfying interests and hobbies and become aware of community libraries as institutions of continuing education and cultural life. By all these means the integrating force of the library reveals itself in the life of the modern elementary school.

The broad objectives of the elementary school library do not become realities automatically. Neither is the integrating force of the library automatic. The program must be carefully planned and continually nurtured. This planning and nurturing involves the central school administration, the school library supervisor, if there is one, the principal of the school, the school librarian, and every teacher in the school. The initial planning of the various relationships involved in the integration of library facilities and the cur-

riculum is essentially an administrative matter since it involves the organization of courses of study, policies involving the selection of books, plans for the use and circulation of library materials and for the daily use of the school library. Keeping in mind that the act of bringing all parts together in a whole is true integration, we need first to build the library into the curriculum pattern of the school. Only thus can true integration of the library in the elementary school program be achieved. By what means is the library built into the curriculum pattern of the school, a pattern which is of necessity constantly changing? There are many and varied practices which are being used by schools. Undoubtedly other means are being developed daily as principals, teachers, and librarians, with vision, work together to give boys and girls the best possible educational experiences during their early school years. Let us examine some of the practices which are now in operation in elementary schools.

Courses of study are constantly being revised and teacher committees working under some central authority in charge of curriculum usually do the actual work of revision or rewriting. The elementary school librarian serves on these committees and has an important role to play in curriculum construction. She is the materials specialist in the school. Her training has given her an unusual opportunity to know children's books, and the very nature of her work requires constant study and reading of new children's books in order to "keep up" with new books in the various fields. She has skill in the use of standard book selection aids. She has the ability to locate new materials and to eval-



uate them in the light of the needs of the course of study. She is able to give first hand information on what types of books have the most appeal to children at the various levels of development. She can suggest books for the accelerated reader, books for the slow reader, story books with factual information, and magazines which will be suitable for use with the various courses of study. The school librarian's contribution to the building of courses of study is unlimited.

Many elementary courses of study are now organized and written so that they require extensive use of the library. Bibliographies which include page references in individual books are listed under each unit of work. The books listed include various levels of reading in order to take care of the wide differences which exist in individual reading abilities in any class. Including these references in the courses of study is one of the most effective ways of assuring close integration of the library with the curriculum. The teacher can see at a glance what is available in the library on any unit. She can then notify the librarian of the unit of work which she is about to begin and ask that the librarian send her everything which is available. In addition to the books in the bibliographies there will always be other material in the library which the children may look up for themselves, so this plan in no way deprives children of library reference work in connection with assigned topics. It is a time saving device for both teachers and children.

Copies of all courses of study used in the school need to be in the library for the use of the school librarian. She must familiarize herself with the courses

in order to build up the book collection so that it has a vital part in the curriculum. She needs this information also in order to serve the book needs of both teachers and children. In fact, the librarian who is not thoroughly familiar with the courses of study is unable to give the leadership needed for integrating the library with the curriculum of the school.

The selection of books for the school library is one of the most interesting and important phases of the work. It affects the entire personnel of the school and involves the cooperation of principal, teachers, library supervisor, subject supervisors, school librarian, and children. Often supplementary books in such fields as social studies, science, music, physical education or the teaching of reading are selected by book committees working under the direction of a special supervisor. Often school librarians are members of these committees. Sometimes they are not. Sometimes the committees recommending books are the same committees that build the courses of study. At any rate, the books selected by these book committees are supplementary books which are essential for the course of study. They form an important part of the book collection of the library and are circulated to classrooms as needed. They are integrating forces! Within the school, the school librarian is considered the "book authority" and often she is responsible for the selection of all recreational reading, and reference and supplementary books other than those selected by committees. This is a tremendous responsibility. The librarian needs to make full use of the knowledge of various members of the faculty in their special fields and carefully



Learning how to use the card catalog is important for reference work.

weigh every suggestion in the light of pupil interest.

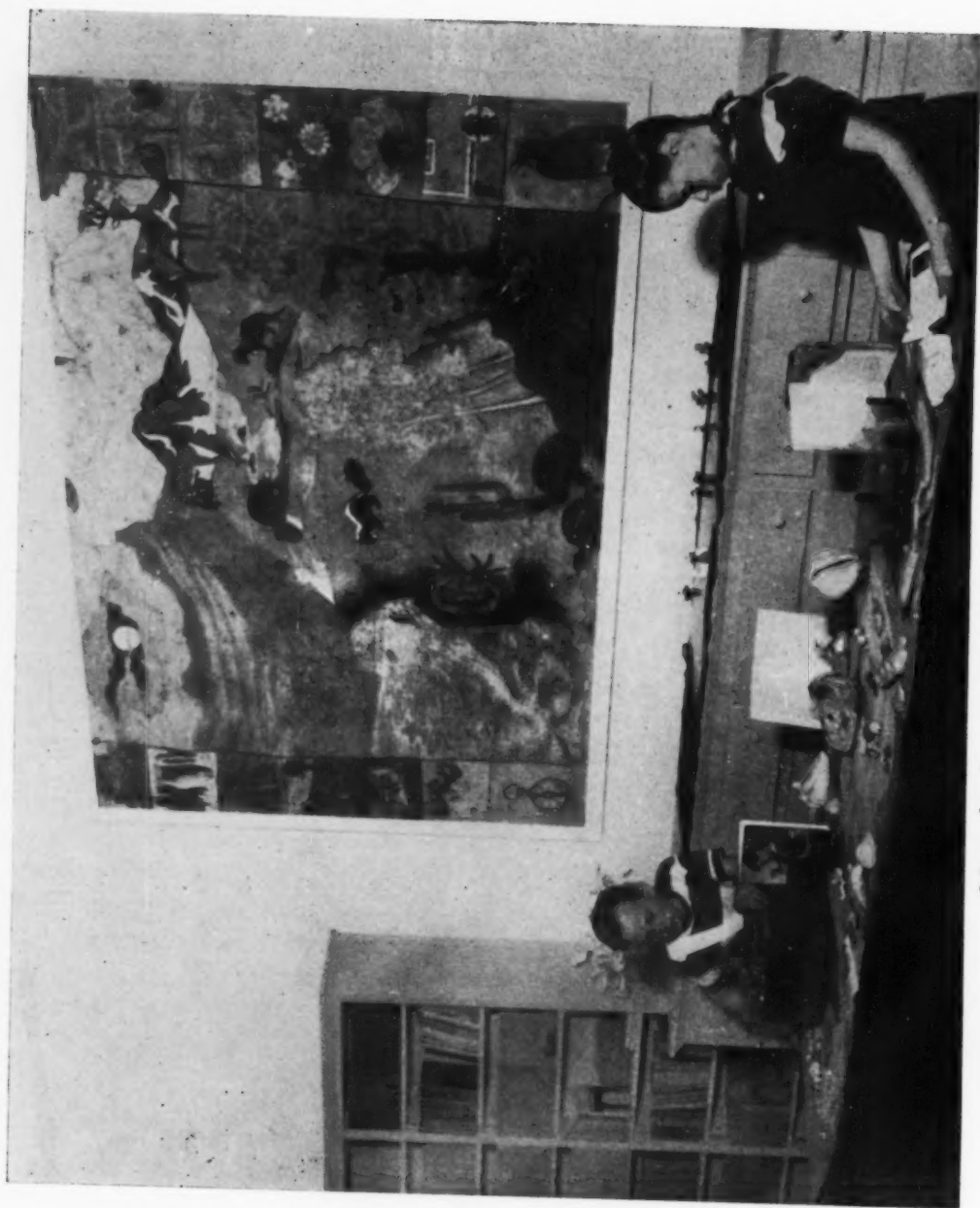
The librarian is the one person in the school who knows the book collection thoroughly. She must be able to and willing to make suggestions to both teachers and children for any type of request they may make of her. In order to do this intelligently she needs to advise with teachers about reading needs of children. She must become familiar with individual children's reading abilities as reflected through their scores on standard reading tests. She needs to keep in touch with classroom activities by frequent conferences with teachers so that she might suggest suitable stories related to units of work in progress in the classroom. She needs to fill requests promptly for materials for use in the classroom so that classroom work is not delayed. The teacher can help greatly by cooperating directly with the school librarian by keeping her advised of classroom work and new activities. The librarian and teacher are indeed most important factors in maintaining the integrating role of the library in the school.

The principal needs to share in the planning for circulation of books to and from classrooms. Some books may be needed for several weeks, others for the duration of a unit of work, others for one period only. It is quite likely that in large schools the principal may need to plan with teachers the sequence in which they will teach the various units in such courses as science or social studies where the demand for library books is so great. It is the rare library which can supply several sixth grades, for example, with the same group of books at the same time for a given

unit of work. By changing the sequence of teaching the units, such difficulties are easily overcome. It is important that principal, teachers, and librarian are all aware of any such adjustments. It is important too that all concerned with the use of the library cooperate fully with whatever arrangements are decided upon in regard to time limits for circulation periods. No extensive rules for using elementary libraries are necessary, but certain regulations are in order so that all teachers and classes may share alike in the benefits.

The elementary library must be set up according to accepted library standards if it is to function properly. A simplified Dewey Decimal system of classification is successfully used in elementary school libraries and a simplified dictionary catalog provides an index to all material in the library. The librarian usually must make certain adjustments in her catalog on the basis of the curriculum, in order to have the catalog bear a direct relationship to the school program. Subject headings assigned to catalog cards may follow closely the subjects of units in such courses of study as science or social studies, since it is in these fields where most reference work is carried on. Pamphlets and pictures may be classified by using subject headings taken from the same courses of study. Thus the technical processes in the library are closely integrated with the school program.

How does the school library affect the daily life of the children as they go about their tasks? It becomes an integral part of the learning and living experience of the children only in proportion as provision is made for its constant and extensive use.



Many books are needed in the Science Room.



Any plan which the principal or central school administration may work out is satisfactory if it makes the library accessible to all children for reference and reading purposes, and provides time for children to go to the library regularly. One plan which is in current use in many schools, includes a daily allotment of time in the library for each class, with provision for individual children to use the library at any other time of the day for special work. This plan enables the school librarian to carry on a definite program of activities with each class, which includes instruction in the use of books and libraries, storytelling, group discussions of books, reference reading in connection with classroom activities, recreational reading, and reading guidance. A planned schedule for library activities is considered by many principals to be as important as a planned schedule for arithmetic, spelling or any other educational activity. Only by careful planning does the school library serve as an integrating factor in the child's educational experience.

The importance of the school librarian in this entire picture of integration can not be overstressed. No matter how adequate the book collection and how fine

the library room, the effectiveness of the library is determined to a great extent by the personnel in charge. The librarian quite naturally must assume much of the responsibility for seeing that the library functions as an integral part of the school and not as a detached and separate unit. A full time adequately trained school librarian who devotes all of her energies to developing the library program in the school, is the ideal situation. Unfortunately school finances often do not permit the addition of added personnel when a library is established, and so the library is assigned temporarily to a teacher-librarian with some school library training, or to a teacher with no school library training. Even this arrangement is a good beginning. The success of this necessarily limited library program is determined by the knowledge, enthusiasm, and vision in general that the person selected has for school library work, plus an administrative adjustment in the school program which allots special time to her for the library. No integrating force can emerge from the library when the person in charge is expected to "do library work" after school, or as an added job to an already full program of teaching.

# A Third-Grade Adventure in Ballad Making

BEATRICE COHEN<sup>1</sup>

A "poetry lesson," if such a thing exists at all, is too often the most stilted, stereotyped, and teacher-dominated period in a school program. The more docile child will struggle to see what it is that the teacher wants him to listen to. We have no way of evaluating what he actually learns from most teacher-motivated poem study. The normal youngster who wishes to think for himself may learn to turn a deaf ear to the most skillful and artistic presentation by a teacher, who may, herself, love poetry but who has forgotten that emotion is rooted in deep personal feeling and thinking and not in the acceptance of an extrinsic interpretation. The distaste, the indifference, indeed, the active antagonism for poetry found so often in the higher grades may stem from the normal child's resentment when his responses to aesthetic experiences are being dictated rather than cultivated.

What can we do about the sorry state of poetry in our schools? The following description of an experience in verse with eight-year olds may contain some clues. It is presented not for its startling originality, not as a solution to a big problem, but merely as a poetry-writing episode which seemed to "click", and which left the children with an increased enthusiasm for all poetry—at least for the time being!

A poetry experience for the active, adventurous, gregarious eight year old must, if it is to contribute to his real enjoyment, be adapted to his immediate age level.

The average eight-year old, as all third grade teachers know, is full of enthusiasm and energy. He is a good listener, especially for the tales of adventure. He particularly delights in group activities, and is developing as a social being. He possesses natural rhythm and enjoys the strong marked rhythm of the rope skipping rhymes, counting-out games, and that universal eight and nine-year old chant, probably sung with the same cadence all over the globe: "I know Johnny's girl friend!" His vocabulary is growing in leaps and bounds and he enjoys the sound of new words, and especially of rhyming words. Our happy experience with third graders is described below.

The teacher prepared the ground work by reading many forms of poetry to the class. Many of the pupils read their favorite poems aloud to their classmates. All this was by way of preparation.

The class seemed to enjoy ballads. These, being the simplest form of poetry, spirited, dramatic, and tuneful, seemed natural for the children's creative work. This is the way we proceeded to make up our poem or ballad. (The word "ballad," however, was never introduced to the children throughout the entire project.)

*Robinson Crusoe* was a favorite story of many children because of its interesting sequence of events and its dramatic action. "Robinson Crusoe for Young Folks,"  
<sup>1</sup>Third Grade teacher, Sherman School, Fairfield, Conn.

Daniel Defoe's Story Retold by Stella and William Nida" was chosen as the most understandable version for third graders.

The teacher read aloud to the children the first two chapters of the story. After reviewing them in story form, several children offered what to themselves sounded like a verse. Some contributions were meaningless, rhythmless phrases, while others had rhythm. Not too much emphasis was placed on correct form. We found we had to "assemble" our first satisfactory stanza by accepting a line at a time. We chanted and "clapped out" the rhythm although as yet we had no music for it.

We continued in this matter composing verses for each successive adventure that Robinson Crusoe experienced. For some chapters we did not compose any stanza; for others, as they were offered, whether piece-meal or complete, we had more than one. Each important happening that Robinson experienced seemed to call for an attempt to make a new stanza.

As we were composing our ballad, the children pantomimed the verses recited. They all felt the basic rhythmic pattern of the ballad. If a child, however, offered a stanza in which the rhythm changed, we accepted it to keep the continuity of action and to encourage any attempt.

We correlated many activities with this poetry unit for third grade:

I. Music - The children enjoyed a rich music experience as an outgrowth of their poem. The mother of one of our pupils became very much interested in the project. When we completed the verses, she composed simple ballad music with

a recurrent refrain to fit the pattern of the children's ballad. Some of the more somber stanzas lent themselves to interpretation in the minor key which is characteristic of folk ballads. The more dramatic stanzas she interpreted with appropriate variations. Since it was the children's composition, they could intimately feel how music interprets varied emotions. This music angle of our ballad became the highlight of the unit.

II. Art - The children brought in several versions of the story with their varying illustrations. Thus they could compare the different view points that artists have of Crusoe's appearance, his home and his clothes. They drew their own versions of Robinson Crusoe.

III. Social Studies - The class traced the route of the voyage which brought Crusoe to his tropical island. They discussed the topography of the island; they talked about the climate and its influence on his mode of living, eating and dressing. They talked of the birds and animals that lived with him; they learned about the people that inhabited neighboring islands and how they differed from us. We even played imaginatively with the idea of Robinson's being ship-wrecked in Arctic regions; of how he might have survived there.

IV. Language - Punctuation, phrase transposition, practice in copying verse form were incidental learning of this lesson.

V. Vocabulary - The search for the best words for the color and dramatic meaning of a verse, the rhyming words and the words to fit the pattern of rhythm stretched the vocabulary of the child.

VI. Dramatization - We played games in which the children spontaneously acted out various stanzas of the ballad. As an outgrowth of this project the class put on a program for the PTA meeting. A chorus of the entire class sang the words of their ballad to piano accompaniment while a select group pantomimed.

A carry-over from this experience in group verse-making came about when a tree was felled in the school yard. This incident was simple but dramatic. Several simple verses were written about this by the children.

We found that the class as a whole were poetry conscious throughout the school year. At no time during the project was the feeling of group coordination lacking. Each child felt he had a part in making up the poem.

We feel that perhaps the success of this poetry experience comes from this group coordination, from the fact that the children, naturally primitive, composed their ballads in much the same way as ballads were composed in primitive days. That is, one child sang a line, another added his line to the story, and so on until the ballad came to life.

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### THE NEW APPROACH TO READING

(Continued from Page 311)

dren. There should be many pictures to make the text more easily comprehensible.

In the primary grades of a modern school, reading is so integrated with the interest-activity program that it fits easily into the children's experiences. They accept both as a necessary means of informa-

tion and as a source of pleasure. The "reading period" is not the dreaded toil of early days, a nightmare of unfamiliar symbols representing ideas unrelated to the children's daily lives. Instead, the accomplishment of reading is a proud exercise of new power and enjoyment where the child reads as fast as he is able.



# Criteria for Evaluating Programs of Oral and Written Language

N. IREAN COYNER<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this article is to offer general principles concerning children's growth in language power and the relation of language to their personality development. They can be used to evaluate a school's program in oral and written language.

Language arts include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They develop in that sequential order out of the experiences of children. The language arts are interrelated, and any one aspect may help or hinder every other aspect in the development of language power as well as in the development of personality.

Language is considered a functional dynamic force in the development of personality, enabling one to think and to communicate. Language growth and personality development are aspects of an interactive process. Language power enables the child to communicate with others, and through that communication the child engages in activities with others. This socialization contributes to the child's developing personality. When he learns that he can influence people in his environment through the use of language, then language growth and social growth develop simultaneously. This process is an interrelated one, and it operates in an ever-expanding kind of relationship.

Several concepts are generally accepted in our thinking about children and their growth. For example, it is recognized that the child has social, physical, emotional,

and intellectual aspects to his growth. These aspects are interrelated and interactive. Any one aspect may help or hinder every other aspect in the total development of the individual. The child and his total environment are interactive, each modifying and being modified by the other, as the individual matures through his daily living in our culture.

A fundamental challenge in our education today is to help the child understand that verbal symbols are for labeling his ideas and experiences and those of others. He must do this in order to sort them in relation to his values, and in order to communicate them. Through this process he is able to be effective in groups.

In considering oral and written language in child development, research findings and literature in the field give us several principles. Criteria can be set up from them to serve the classroom teacher as one kind of evaluation to be applied to the experiences children have in school.

Four general criteria<sup>2</sup> will be offered. Under each is a series of questions breaking the generalization into specifics for consideration.

<sup>1</sup>Assistant in Instruction, Oakland Public Schools.

<sup>2</sup>N. Irean Coyner, *City Elementary Courses of Study in Oral and Written Language*. Unpublished M. A. Thesis, Stanford University, 1949.

***Criterion 1—Individual Differences***

It is recognized that the child's development in language power is closely related to his general maturation. It is known that all children go through the same stages of development, but there is wide variation in their rate of growth.

Is there provision for recognizing, understanding, and interpreting the stage of the child's development? For example, such stages as parallel-talking, egocentric period, the exaggerated language of the eight-year-old, or the nine-year-old who make errors in form because of the complexity of his ideas, and because they come faster than his skill in writing can record them. Is there a consideration of the child's sentence power as an indication of his stage in language development? Is the child's language studied to note the use made of pronouns and connectives as an indication of developing maturity in language?

Is there acceptance of the concept that absolute accuracy in language is a matter of maturation plus the guidance of children in usage, form, and a cultivation of the desire for accuracy?

Is there provision for differentiation in tension of the child's interests and experiences to promote growth generally and language power specifically, and is provision made to clarify concepts through oral and written language?

Is there provision differentiation in language experience to meet the range in needs and interests of different groups of children?

To provide for individual differences, the school must begin with a study of the child, his needs, interests, capacities, and activities, both in and out of school.

***Techniques Teachers Use to Study the Language Needs of Children***

Skillful teachers have used the techniques discussed here. Then they have used the needs of particular children as the content of programs in oral and written language.

Observations of children in the classroom, on the playground, and in the lunchroom to note their interests and use of language for communications are means of gathering data about children's language development. Teachers have found it helpful to note the child's ability to use language appropriate for different kinds of experiences as one indication of where the child is in his development; for example, observations of the informal language used by a sixth grader on the playground, and the same child's ability to use more formal usage in an interview with an airport guide or newspaper reporter. To the observer this is evidence of a kind of maturity in the child's language power since it indicates feeling for appropriate usage.

Interest inventories used in the intermediate and upper grades help a teacher to provide for individual differences among children. Self-portraits in these grades also give valuable clues concerning the needs of youngsters. An alert teacher can use the information to assist her in building an environment conducive to language development.

Child study inventories, home visits, and conferences with parents give information about the background experiences of the child. These, in addition to the usual standardized test and health data, are valuable in diagnosing the child's needs. For example, the socio-economic level of the home, the number of siblings and the child's position in the family, the stability of the home situation, and the out-of-school activities of the child are pertinent to language development.

Conversations with children before, after, and during the school day are effective in discovering the needs of children. During the telling, the teacher observes the feeling tone of the child—not only what the child says but the way he says it lets one know about the child's developing personality and language needs.

All written and oral communication when judged by its effectiveness on others gives the teacher insight into a child's ordering of ideas and understanding of words and form to express them.

***Criterion 2—Environment Conducive to Growth in Language Power***

It is recognized that language power develops through experiences in an environment which is physically, socially, and intellectually stimulating and capable of arousing ideas and feelings in the child. The environment must also include guidance if language is to function in meeting the child's personal integrative needs and serve as a medium of communication in the socialization of the child.

Is there provision for the child's need to feel secure and accepted in order for him to participate in free discussion?

Is there practice in democratic living; that is, participation in planning; in setting up goals, in cooperatively carrying out plans, and in evaluating outcomes?

Are the experiences in the environment broad enough to stimulate the child to acquire social responsibility to use appropriate oral and written expression for various occasions? Are some of these experiences outside his immediate home environment?

Are experiences pointed up enough to enable the child to grow in sensitivity to the effects which language expression produce in other persons?

Are there functional experiences for the child to communicate in a speaker and/or writer audience relationship in accordance with his level of development?

Are there language experiences in group enterprises; that is, learning the language appropriate for the leader and participating members in various kinds of group situations?

Are there opportunities for the child to organize and systematize his personal and group experiences through purposeful oral and written language?

Are there opportunities for the child to use language for releasing his emotions, thus helping him to discover the therapeutic value in talking and writing about his feelings?

Are all areas of the environment—in school and out—considered content for oral and written expression?

***How Does a Teacher Create With Children an Environment Conducive to Language Development?***

A teacher's acceptance of the child is fundamental. Her ability to appreciate and accept individual differences in all areas—physical, emotional, social, as well as intellectual—is necessary for a leader in a democratic classroom. Children learn the values of the society in which they live. School is a society. The teacher's example in the early elementary grades is powerful in developing in the young child appreciations and values of his own individual differences and those of others.

In a democratic classroom children plan, carry out plans, and evaluate their work. The teacher's role is one of guidance in the use of language as well as guidance in the group process. They are interrelated and accomplished best in a functional undertaking. Aspects of the experience which produced the ideas, or the language, or the group process may have to be pulled out of the whole for further clarification and practice.

Sociograms or friendship charts of the group enable a teacher to know the status needs and friendship aspirations of particular children. With this information the teacher is able to get at the dynamics of the group and to assist children in their development of satisfying interpersonal relationships. The relationships in the school group help to determine the security of an individual; therefore, they contribute to the communication of his ideas and feelings in group undertakings.

Language enables the child to think and to integrate his experiences. When the child feels secure in school, and the class-

room environment is permissive enough, and all the child's experience is content for language expression, then the child uses language for the release it affords him in meeting his own psychological and emotional needs. This therapeutic type of language experience is a challenge to the teacher who is guiding the child's understanding of himself and his experiences, because values are coming out of that understanding in the developing child. He will live by and contribute to society according to his values.

The intellectual environment of a child must be full of idea-provoking experiences with people and things. A stimulating one will contribute to maximum language development if the child has opportunity to talk and write about his experiences.

The physical environment has considerable influence over language development. Face-to-face contacts in sitting around a table encourage and enable children to grow in sensitivity to the effects of language on others as well as facilitate interchange of ideas in group undertakings. One can build ideas, and plan actions with those ideas in more effective and satisfying ways, if the seating is conducive to easy flow of them.

***What Can the Teacher Do to Help the Child Develop Social Responsibility to Use Language?***

Build into the curriculum the experience necessitating language behavior in social situations. Examples of such experiences are those calling for host and hostess behaviors, guest behaviors of engaging in conversation and other social activities of guests. Letter writing growing out of



group or individual needs builds social habits in the use of written expression as another medium of establishing satisfying relationships. The language needs of life situations is the crux of building responsible behavior. Development of social responsibility in these areas requires provision for wide experiencing to enable children from various socio-economic groups to develop feelings of adequacy in social situations differing from their immediate environment.

### *Criterion 3—How We Learn*

It is recognized that the activities of oral and written language must be based on accepted principles of learning.

Is self-activity considered basic to learning?

Is the child experiencing satisfaction in his activities?

Is provision made for the child to assist in setting up and evaluating his own goals in relation to his needs, interests, and purposes?

Is there provision for the child to develop wider and deeper meanings for words through extended experiences which develop from the concrete to the abstract?

### *Application of Principles of Learning to Oral and Written Language*

The following writers have made applications of learning principles to the field of language expression:

McKee writes that

... instruction in oral expression is basic to written expression at all grade levels.<sup>3</sup>

Durrell states,

Practice in the language abilities in which he is not proficient takes on added zest when the skills are utilized immediately. The dangers inherent in an intensive skills program are reduced by a rich pur-

posive group program.<sup>4</sup>

Trabue writes,

The successive language goals toward which a child is being developed should exist in the consciousness of the child himself as it was in the mind of the teacher.<sup>5</sup>

Trabue applied the principle of "identical elements" to the language situation and states,

In his life outside the language class the most important "element" in almost any "situation" in which an individual finds himself is a purpose, a desire to get something done, or a feeling of need. Unless the original classroom situation in which he learned to make a given language response was also dominated by a similar purpose, desire, or need, it is extremely difficult for the individual to recognize in the current life situation those "identical elements" to which he learned a satisfactory response in school.

Fitzgerald and Knaphle made an appraisal of the language errors found in life letters written by children in the third, fourth, and fifth grades. The purpose was to find the difficulties which tend to persist from grade to grade.

They concluded that if the sentence is taught in dynamic way to convey mean-

<sup>3</sup>Paul McKee, "An Adequate Program in the Language Arts," *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, p. 29. Forty-third Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Vol. XLIII, Part II. Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education, 1942.

<sup>4</sup>Donald D. Durrell, "Caring for Individual and Group Needs," *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, p. 107. Forty-third Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Vol. XLIII, Part II. Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education, 1942.

<sup>5</sup>M. R. Trabue, "Significant Issues in Language Arts Instruction," *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, p. 240. Forty-third Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Vol. XLIII, Part II. Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education, 1942.

ning to someone, most of the errors will be eliminated.<sup>6</sup>

*Grade Placement in Oral and Written Language*

There is a growing body of opinion concerning the problem of grade placement of topics in the field of language.

Smith concluded,

. . . there is no hierarchy of discrete skills in language which can be recorded serially and learned in a similar fashion. The process of growth in control over language is one of gradual development of a unified, interrelated body of skills in response to the social stimuli of the child's environment—a sort of spiral growth, broadening, extending, and refining what is there and in use, for the most part, from infancy on . . . . Neither can there be mastery of certain fundamentals by all children at a given grade level; for growth in language is like growth in other aspects of the child's being. It depends on the innate powers with which he is endowed as an individual, the challenge and nurture of his environment, and his own peculiar pattern and rate of growth.<sup>7</sup>

Smith continued and indicated how this problem may be worked out in curriculum construction.

Needs in the field of usage tend to be individual in character, although a few appear to be common to different stages of development. Analysis of the skills in punctuation and capitalization used at different grade levels indicates the possibility of discovering those most important at different stages of the child's progress through school. It is quite possible that, for the sake of practical curriculum-making, *moments of initial attack* upon specific problems may be worked out for individual school systems, but obviously *no set standards of mastery can be imposed upon all children at any specific grade level*. Language power simply doesn't grow that way. Progress in it cannot outrun the individual child's capacity for thinking nor his social development in

relationship to other human beings and to his environment.<sup>8</sup>

Trabue states,

It is practically impossible and educationally undesirable to set any minimum level of achievement in language and require all pupils in a given grade or of a given age to reach that standard, just as it would be impossible to set any given height or weight as a minimum for all children of a given age or grade. . . . A teacher of the language arts must have clearly in mind the habits that are essential in speaking and writing effectively, the sequential order in which these habits normally develop, and the types of experience by which growth in each of these habits is normally promoted. She can study each pupil to discover just which of the desirable language habits he has acquired, stimulate and guide him in those instructional experiences that will help him to develop the additional habits that he needs to acquire next, and thus assist him in making as much progress as is possible for him in the direction of effective expression in English.<sup>9</sup>

Strickland's viewpoint bears this out, too.

Progress in the mastery of language is not a matter of planned instruction and willing learning, but rather a process of natural development and maturation in an environment which provides stimulation and guidance. There are levels of mental development following one another in natural sequence which represent

<sup>6</sup>James A. Fitzgerald and Lawrence C. Knaphle, "Crucial Language Difficulties in Letter Writing of Elementary School Children," *The Elementary English Review*, XXI (January, 1944), 14-20.

<sup>7</sup>Dora V. Smith, "Growth in Language Power as Related to Child Development," *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, pp. 91-92. Forty-third Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, XLIII, Part II. Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education, 1942.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 92-93.

<sup>9</sup>Trabue, op. cit., p. 239.

new powers and which are portrayed in the language used to express them. Language and thought develop together as an integrated whole. Language is of little value without ideas to express, and ideas are themselves dependent upon language. Education cannot be hurried process of forced development.<sup>10</sup>

The teacher's role is a highly skilled and artistic one when children have broad meaningful experiences according to their individual needs. It is through such experiences that the child learns to use language for personal and social purposes in an effective and satisfying manner.

#### *Criterion 4—Concept of Evolving Language*

It is recognized that language is an evolving dynamic system of symbols and form to facilitate thought and feeling for purposes of communication.

Is current usage accepted as revealed by recent studies?

Is usage determined by the needs of the situation in which language is used? For example, are there experiences for both formal and informal writing and speaking?

Are there opportunities for the child to build values of appropriateness; for example, when the use of certain greetings, certain acknowledgements in introductions, when colloquial expressions are appropriate?

#### *Studies of Current Usage*

Leonard made a study of opinion about the usage of words and expressions usually questioned in grammar and handbooks. It was a survey of opinion of linguistic specialists, editors, authors, businessmen, and teachers of English concerning what usage is rather than what usage ought to be.

Markwardt and Walcott later studied the facts about current English and concluded that usage

. . . is seen to be not something final and static, but merely the organized description or codification of the actual speech habits of educated men. If these habits change, grammar itself changes and textbooks must follow suit.<sup>11</sup>

The consensus seems to be well summed by Seegers.

A language which is current, which is used, cannot remain static. It is never fixed. Its grammar changes. New words are introduced. Old words are lost or change their meanings. Inevitably one is led to the conclusion that grammars and dictionaries are descriptive, rather than prescriptive. They describe what is, not what must be.<sup>12</sup>

He continues and points to the problem as found in education.

This manifest and highly desirable situation is sometimes quite damaging to the morale of those teachers who feel that they must have something tangible to teach, something definite to require, something exact to rely upon. It is not likely that all teachers will ever be thoroughly informed regarding the evolving character of language. It is not included in the typical teacher-education curriculum, although it would contribute greatly to a desirable attitude toward the teaching of

<sup>10</sup>Ruth G. Strickland, "The Language and Mental Development of Children," p. 26. *Bulletin of the School of Education*, Vol. XXIII, No. 2. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University, 1947.

<sup>11</sup>Albert Marckwardt and Fred G. Walcott, *Facts About Current English Usage*, p. 136. English Monograph No. 7. The National Council of Teachers of English. New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1938.

<sup>12</sup>J. Conrad Seegers, "Language in Relation to Experience, Thinking, and Learning," *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, p. 40. Forty-third Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Vol. XLIII, Part II. Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education, 1942.

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# The National Council of Teachers of English

## BROADENING THE CHILD'S UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH BOOKS<sup>1</sup>

With our quickened realization that our way of life is insecure unless we are able to establish a permanent peace based upon the one-world concept, we pause to reflect on the meaning of the term and the basic elements that are essential to give it substance. We know that any form of one-world alliance must be based upon true sensitivity to other people, their patterns of living, and their cultures. These understandings will come only through knowledge of how people in other lands think, live, worship, and work. It is important that the child who is growing up into a world where his only security in the future is dependent upon the development of this real understanding between people be directed to books which will give him an increased understanding of human relationships, an appreciation of character, a knowledge of people in other countries as well as the foreign-born who live in his own society, and an appreciation of the cultural contributions of these people to his own society.

The reading of good literature will direct and mold the child's attitudes toward understandings of human relationships in his present world and the world in which he will soon become a responsible citizen. The approach the adult may use to direct the child's reading activities may be interesting and varied. The child will extend his understandings through the use of many types of reading materials: fiction, biography, realistic stories, poetry, history, and legends. Naturally parents, teachers, librarians, and group leaders must continue to exercise powers of evaluation and discrimination to direct the young reader to

books that possess literary merit of lasting value.

I have chosen the following categories for grouping books in order to call attention to a few of the many fine books which will lead to a greater understanding of human relationships.

- I. Books which will give the child insight into life in other lands.
- II. Books which will enable the child to appreciate human characteristics and adjustments the foreign-born and minority groups must make in our land.
- III. Books to develop an awareness and appreciation of the contributions made to our society by these two groups.
- IV. Books which will present to the child the interdependence and interrelationships of people living and working together in our own society.

In the first division the following books have real merit:

Piper, Hatty - *Little Folks of Other Lands*, Platt & Munk, 1929. This is a colorful book for the younger child. It discusses clothes, food, and ways children live around the world.

Lattimore, Eleanor - *Little Pear?*

Pear is a little Chinese boy who has the usual activities of any six or seven year old. The reader discovers how an average Chinese family lives.

Buck, Pearl - *Chinese Children Next Door*, John Day, 1942.

These are stories told to her American children by a mother who spent her childhood in China.

Seredy, Kate - *The Good Master*, Viking, 1935.

A story of Hungarian girlhood spent on a farm. The characters are humanized, and there is colorful insight into the legends of the land.

<sup>1</sup>By Genevieve H. Haight, prepared for the Council's Committee on Intercultural Relations.



Lyon, Elinor - *Wishing Water Gate*, Coward-McCann, 1948.

A story written with a post-war England background. It would be an interesting book to develop an appreciation of English family life.

Buff, Mary and Conrad - *Kabi, A Boy of Switzerland*, Viking, 1936.

This book gives a picture of a Swiss boy's everyday life and work.

Brenner, Anita - *The Boy Who Could Do Anything*, Scott, 1942.

A collection of folk-tales of Mexico.

Hewes, Agnes - *Anabel's Windows*, Dodd, Mead, 1948.

This is a story of an American girl's experiences during the time she lives in Syria.

Lewis, Elizabeth - *Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze*

- *Ho-ming, Girl of New China*

- *When the Typhoon Blows*

Elizabeth Lewis' books on China furnish excellent means of giving our children an insight into the transition from Old to New China. Young Fu is a thirteen year old Chinese boy brought from the country and apprenticed to a coppersmith in Chungking. His activities give us a glimpse of the inner life of China.

The second category presents these books for our attention:

Lenski, Lois - *Cotton in the Sack*, Lipincott, 1949.

Here is a realistic picture of a cotton-picking family in Arkansas and their adjustments to their work.

Donkonszky, Dorothea - *Sugar Bush*, Nelson, 1947.

This book recounts the adjustment of a Polish family to a Vermont farm community.

Angelo, Valenti - *The Rooster Club*, Viking, 1944.

Boys should be interested in this story of an Italian-American boy and the place he makes for himself in a Boy Scout Troop.

Judson, Clara - *Michael's Victory*, Houghton, 1946.

A book which traces the experiences of a family driven from Ireland dur-

ing the potato famine and their settling on an Ohio Farm.

Association for Childhood Education - *Told Under the Stars and Stripes*, Macmillan, 1945.

This is a collection of stories about children of various national and racial origins in America.

Coblentz, Catherine - *Blue and Silver Necklaces*, Little Brown, 1937.

A story of a little Hopi Indian girl who adjusts to new ways of living in the American school.

Means, Florence - *The Moved-Outers*, Houghton - Mifflin, 1945.

This book tells of the experiences which come to the Japanese who were moved to the relocation camps during the war.

Lederer, Charlotte - *Yanks in America*, Crowell, 1943.

The experiences of a Czech family who adjusted to life in an American village are interestingly told.

There are many books which would furnish excellent background material to accomplish the aims included in the third division. Among these are

Beard, Annie - *Our Foreign-Born Citizens*, Crowell,

This book contains biographies of outstanding foreign-born citizens and the contributions they have made to our society.

Becker, John - *The Negro in American Life*, Messner, 1944.

A study of Negroes who have contributed to the welfare and culture of our nation from the time of the American Revolution to the present time.

Eaton, Jeanette - *Young Lafayette*, Houghton Mifflin, 1937.

A historical tale which will give the child insight into our debt to the young French leader who befriended the Colonists.

Levinger, Elma - *The Golden Door*, Block, 1947.

Here is a group of stories of people of Jewish background who have contributed to the building of America.

Shakelford, Jane - *The Child's Story of the Negro*, Washington Associated Publishers, 1938.

Many biographies of outstanding Negroes indicate various contributions made to society.

In the last division one may find many excellent books to establish understandings of how people work together. A few suggestions include

Wainer, Gertrude - *Children of the Harvest*, Friendship Press, 1940.

Here is a story of migratory workers which is helpful in portraying social groups and their interrelationships.

McCullough, John - *Good Work; What will You Be When You Grow Up?* Young Scott Books, 1948.

A book which clarifies the meaning of different groups working together.

Hader, Berta and Elmer - *The Farmer in the Dell*, Macmillan, 1931.

For the younger child this book introduces various farm activities for each season of the year.

Leaf, Munro - *Fair Play*, Lippincott, 1939.

An excellent book written with humor to indicate to the child how to work and play with other people.

Tarshis, Elizabeth - *Look at America*, McBride, 1942.

A study of different groups who live in America, their dependence on each other and their environment.

Judson, Clara - *People Who Work in the Country and the City*, Rand, 1943.

A presentation of many different types of occupations in America and the cooperation which is required of each group contributing to various industries.

Paul Hazard wrote in his *Books, Children, and Men*<sup>1</sup>: "Yes, children's books keep alive a sense of nationality; but they also keep alive a sense of humanity. They describe their native land lovingly, but they also describe quality of their own race; but each of them is a messenger that goes beyond mountains and rivers, beyond the seas, to the very ends of the world in search of new friendships. Each country gives and every country receives

<sup>1</sup>Paul Hazard, *Books, Children, and Men* - Horn Book, Inc. Translated by Marguerite Mitchell. Boston, 1944. p. 146.

—innumerable are the exchanges—and so it comes about that in our first impressionable years the republic of childhood is born."

#### NATIONAL SPEECH COMMITTEE REPORTS ON SURVEY OF METHODS COURSES IN TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS<sup>1</sup>

"I don't need to be taught how to speak—I have been talking most of my life" is so old that it not only is no longer humorous, but probably no teacher believes that it harbors the grain of truth a witticism is reputed to have. And certainly elementary English teachers with their enviable reputation for leading the vanguard in speech instruction have proved that they are firm believers in the necessity of improving skill in oral communication.

Because so many teachers wish to keep pace with the rapidly changing pedagogy in the oral field, the Speech Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English undertook a survey to learn which institutions are offering courses in speech methods. Inquiries were mailed to the 250 accredited teacher training institutions listed by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Although more than 200 replied, the appended list is incomplete. The term *speech* used in the inquiry guided the request to the Speech Department from the dean of the liberal arts division to whom it was mailed. As a result, many of the replies did not contain information concerning speech methods taught in English and education departments.

The survey is significant, however, because of the data on the large number of schools offering speech methods for teachers and because of the many apologies from those who "are not offering such a course now but hope to add it in the near future." The replies

<sup>1</sup>Prepared by the Speech Committee of the Council. Miss Margaret Painter is Chairman of the committee.

leave no doubt that teacher training institutions are convinced that the skillful teaching of oral communication is not instinctive—it demands study and the frequent re-evaluation of principles.

The Speech Committee of the English Council suggests that teachers interested in securing further training in this field may write to one of the schools listed or to any desired institution, for it is evident that many schools not listed here are offering valuable courses in speech methods. Teachers will note, too, that the committee has made no effort to include methods courses in special phases of speech such as speech correction and lip reading or even the general speech courses, which would be of inestimable value to teachers when no methods course is available.

#### Schools Offering Courses in Methods of Teaching Speech:

- California*—Fresno State College (S); Univ. of California at Los Angeles  
*Connecticut*—Univ. of Miami (R), Coral Gables; Univ. of Florida, Gainesville  
*Idaho*—Northern Idaho College of Educ. (R), Lewiston  
*Illinois*—Chicago Teachers College; National College of Education (R), Evanston; Northwestern Univ., Evanston  
*Indiana*—Indiana State Teachers College (R), Terre Haute  
*Iowa*—University of Iowa, Iowa City  
*Louisiana*—Louisiana State Univ. (R), Baton Rouge  
*Maryland*—State Teachers College (S), Salisbury  
*Massachusetts*—Boston Univ.; Teachers College of the City of Boston (S)  
*Michigan*—Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Northern Michigan College of Education (R), Marquette; Michigan State Normal College (R), Ypsilanti  
*Minnesota*—State Teachers College, St. Cloud  
*Mississippi*—Mississippi Southern College (R),

Hattiesburg; Univ. of Mississippi (R), University

*Missouri*—Northeast Mo. State Teachers College, Kirksville; Stowe Teachers College (R), St. Louis; Southwest Mo. Teachers College, Springfield

*Nebraska*—State Teachers College, Wayne

*New Hampshire*—Keene Teachers College (R)

*New Jersey*—State Teachers College (S) Jersey City

*New Mexico*—Univ. of New Mexico, Albuquerque

*New York*—State College for Teachers, Albany; State Teachers College (R), Buffalo; State Teachers College, Geneseo; Teachers College, Columbia Univ., New York City; New York Univ., N. Y. C.; State Teachers College (S), Potsdam

*North Carolina*—Western Carolina Teachers College, Cullowhee

*North Dakota*—State Teachers College, Valley City

*Ohio*—Univ. of Cincinnati (S), Ohio State Univ., Columbus; Kent Univ. (R); Miami Univ.

*Oklahoma*—Northwestern State College (S), Alva; Central State College (R), Edmond; Univ. of Oklahoma, Norman

*Oregon*—University of Oregon (S), Eugene

*Pennsylvania*—State Teachers College (S), Indiana; State Teachers College (R), Lock Haven; State Teachers College, Millersville; Pennsylvania State College, State College

*South Dakota*—Northern State Teachers College, Aberdeen; Southern State Teachers College, Springfield

*Texas*—West Texas State Teachers College, Canyon, East Texas State Teachers College (R), Commerce; North Texas State Teachers College, Denton; Southwest State Teachers College, San Marcos

*Utah*—Utah State Agricultural College, Logan

*Virginia*—Radford College

*Washington*—Western Washington College of

Educ. (R), Bellingham; Central Washington College of Educ., Ellensburg; State College of Washington (R), Pullman  
*West Virginia*—Bluefield State College; Glenville State College (S)  
*Wisconsin*—State Teachers College, Eau Claire;

State Teachers College, LaCrosse; Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison; State Teachers College (R), Milwaukee; State Teachers College (R), Superior  
*Wyoming*—University of Wyoming (S), Laramie

Speech Committee of National Council of Teachers of English:  
 Dean Harlen M. Adams, Chico State College, Chico, California  
 Prof. L. L. Brink, San Francisco State College, San Francisco, California  
 Miss Naomi Chase, Seattle Public Schools, Seattle, Washington  
 Miss Lois Dilley, West High School, Rockford, Illinois  
 Miss Inez Frost, Hutchinson Junior College, Hutchinson, Kansas  
 Dr. Magdalene Kramer,  
 Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City  
 Mr. Clarence Shoemaker, Shortridge High School Indianapolis, Indiana  
 Chairman, Miss Margaret Painter, Secondary Schools, Modesto, California

#### CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

(Continued from Page 329)

language if it were. Teachers would be much more inclined to consider language a part of life and teach it accordingly. They would not be unconcerned with standards or with grammar, but they would be concerned also with the dynamics of living, the function of language in that living and the effects of that living upon language development.<sup>13</sup>

##### *Needs of Teachers Who Guide Children in Their Language Development*

La Brant is emphatic concerning two great needs in the field of English today.

First, the Council should work with experts in the various fields where language study is being carried on, and publish a series of interpretations or monographs for the classroom teacher who needs information, but does not have the time nor the necessary background to read the many basic studies. Second, the Council should undertake some sort of promotion program which will guarantee that textbook makers, teachers, supervisors, and school superintendents know that such

materials are not only available, but that their study is imperative.<sup>14</sup>

There are needs which teachers recognize. They are the need

to understand child growth in its range of general characteristics for the various developmental levels.

to be skilled in the various techniques of diagnosing child needs generally and language needs specifically.

to have a thorough knowledge of English including current usage.

to be articulate about studies that should be made.

to develop new techniques for evaluating language growth in the teaching-learning environment.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>14</sup>Lou La Brant, "Research in Language," *Elementary English*, XXIV (February, 1947), 89-91.



# Look and Listen

EDITED BY LILLIAN E. NOVOTNY<sup>1</sup>

## Radio and Television

Beginning Sunday, April 30, the world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Ormandy, its musical director, started a series of eight one-hour radio concerts over CBS. The series follows the close of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony broadcast season and may be heard in the first hour of the time formerly allotted to the Philharmonic (CBS, 3:00 - 4:00 PM, EST).

The Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York, 34 Nassau Street, New York 5, New York, has released a series of 15-minute radio scripts on public health problems, as an educational public service. There is no charge for this service, and permission is given to reproduce or present the programs in any form consistent with the proper dissemination of information regarding public health. Titles of the scripts, all written by Gretta Baker, follow:

- One in Every Three (High Blood Pressure)
- The Bride's First Cake (First Aid in the Home)
- Sally's Long Vacation (Rheumatic Fever)
- Teacher's Problem Child (The Problem of Headaches)
- The Heart Remembers (Functional Heart Trouble)
- No Roses for My Lady (Hay Fever)
- An Unexpected Birthday Present (Measles)
- No Fun for Mr. Atlas (Hardening of the Arteries)
- Problem in Chemistry (Diabetes)
- Grandfather's Rocking Chair (Arthritis and Rheumatism)
- It Never Rains But It Pours (Appendicitis)
- Dumb Bunny (Tonsils and Tonsillitis)
- Date Cancelled (Care of the Skin)

The Mystery of the Birthday Sweater (Asthma and other Allergies)

Oscar Katz, CBS Director of Research, shed new light on the public's first look at color television when he revealed the final results of the detailed surveys his department has made, based on 63 Columbia color broadcasts to the public in Washington, from last January 12 to February 1. Based on 9,423 filled-in questionnaires in the first study, a tabulation reveals that:

91 percent of the group were able to watch the pictures satisfactorily from where they sat.

People are about as satisfied with CBS color television whether they view it on a 12½-inch screen, on a 16-inch screen or on a 10-inch converted set.

CBS color pictures made the 450-mile trip over coaxial cable from Washington to New York and back again so well that those who saw color television by inter-city transmission were only slightly more critical of the color picture than those who saw them directly broadcast.

Over-all quality of black-and-white pictures received from a CBS color signal was favorably rated, with 21.8 percent marking the reception "much better" than the over-all quality of standard black-and-white television; 32.1 percent rating it "somewhat better"; and 40 percent rating the over-all quality about the same.

## Films

In the February *Film Counselor* is a report from Gary, Indiana, where an unusual organization called the Anselm Forum has been

<sup>1</sup>Miss Novotny is principal of the Oriole Park School in Chicago, and a member of the Council's Committee on Radio.

demonstrating for a number of years how films can help promote better human relations. Through its film department the Forum has had more than 1000 showings of six films to over 101,000 people. *Brotherhood of Man* has been shown 70 times to a total audience of more than 9000; *Boundary Lines* has been shown 42 times to an audience of 32,000 and *The House I Live In*, with 89 showings, has an attendance record of 36,750.

The films, purchased by the Anselm Forum, have been turned over to the library for booking. Some of the films they have purchased are: *One People, House I Live In, Brotherhood of Man, We Are All Brothers, Make Way for Youth, American Counterpart, Boundary Lines, Songs of America*, and four of their own film strips. Bookings are made without charge to neighboring cities, and even to places as far as California. Films are being booked by such diverse groups as PTAs, U.S. recruitment stations, boy scouts, Ladies Aids, Catholic Women, AMEs, fraternal groups, labor unions, lodges, schools, camps, sisterhood, farmers, newsboys. The Gary Film Council has been cooperating with the library on film bookings.

The Anselm Forum, founded in Gary in 1932, on the firm faith in the value of the individual, and the certainty that all harmonious contact between people of different views and habits are pleasurable and rewarding, although limited to a membership of 150, has gone out into the community. Thirteen panel teams, each composed of six members who are capable of holding round table debates with audience participation, have been formed to appear in the community and the surrounding country. Panels are presented on such subjects as: "Brotherhood—Fact or Fancy?", "One World—Competitive or Cooperative?", "How Much Crime Can a Community Afford?", "Can America Absorb Europe's Displaced Persons?" Films are being used in connection with panels as spearheads for discussion.

Such comments as "I think it a very helpful way for better understanding," "Gave me a broader viewpoint," "I received an untold lesson from it," "make the panels widely known," "prefer this type of presentation to speeches—more interesting," illustrate that intelligent use of films can result in positive audience reaction.

Coronet Instructional Films, Coronet Building, 65 E. South Water Street, Chicago 1, Illinois, released its 1950 catalog of new films early in April. This publication is available free on request to all users of motion pictures.

In March, Encyclopaedia Britannica Films, 1150 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois, began a new service with the release of three British Information Service films: *The History of Writing, The Story of Printing, and Steps of the Ballet*. According to C. Scott Fletcher, president of the American producing company, the step is one of major importance to users of 16mm. educational motion pictures for it will greatly increase the availability of British informational films in the United States.

March of Time Forum Films, 369 Lexington Avenue, New York 17, New York has issued a catalog of available films for purchase or for rental.

*Joint Estimates of Current Motion Pictures*, March issue, recommends *Cinderella* for Family (all ages) and also as a Children's Program Recommendation.

### *Slides and Filmstrips*

Instructional Films, Inc., Division of Films, Inc., 330 West 42nd Street, New York 18, New York, has available a catalog entitled "United States Geo-Historic Map Slides." The series listed begins with the part of the world known to Europeans about 1400 and goes through the Revolutionary War.

Cineque Colorfilm Laboratories, 424 East 89th Street, New York City offer a unique service for those interested in preparing their

own filmstrips or slides. This includes processing of all 16mm and 35mm film (black-and-white or color), duplication in quantities from your originals, reductions to 2x2 slides from larger size copy or transparencies, continuous film strips from original art work or master strips. Slide mounting is also done, as you may require it in any quantity—ready-mounts or glass mounts. They state that no order is too small, none too large—from one to a million.

### Recordings

Folkways Records and Service Corporation, 117 West 46 Street, New York City has issued a catalog on the Folkways Ethnic Library, an independent project specializing in the issuance of ethnic records, filmstrips, and other related materials. These high fidelity records are on non-breakable plastic. Each record album is accompanied by an illustrated manual of background notes. All recordings are made on location by authorities in their fields. Production is designed for general appeal as well as meeting high educational standards in the fields of musicology, anthropology, sociology, the dance, and so on. New albums will be released at regular intervals. All issues are strictly limited.

The following albums, available now, all accompanied by an illustrated manual, cost \$7.33 each:

- Album 1401 Sioux and Navajo Ethnic Music
- Album 1402 Equatorial Africa Ethnic Music
- Album 1403 Drums of Haiti Ethnic Music
- Album 1406 Indonesia (Bali, Java, Sumatra, Malaya) Ethnic Music
- Album 1407 Folk Music of Haiti Ethnic Music
- Album 1408 Middle East-Palestine Ethnic Music
- Album 1409 India Ethnic Music
- Album 1411 Spain Ethnic Music
- Album 1415 Peru Ethnic Music

The *FREC Service Bulletin*, February, states that Gloria Chandler Recordings, Inc., (422½ West 46 Street, New York City) has just re-

leased two new series of educational recordings which are being widely acclaimed by teachers and broadcasters. The two companion pieces to *Books Bring Adventure* are *Adventures in Folk Song* and *Piano Adventures*.

"*Adventures in Folk Song*" does for American history what the first series does for children's literature. It clothes the dry skeletons of dead events, dead men, and very dead facts with vitality and interest and fun and adventure. The series begins with the coming of the first white settlers to the new land of America, touches on the Revolutionary period in Massachusetts and Virginia and follows the spanning of the continent by restless and ambitious Americans. Each program is concerned with the fortunes of one of the many Clark families as they fight for freedom against the British and move out beyond the narrow strip of Colonial seaboard in that great pioneering movement which peopled a continent in 150 years. The programs are full of interesting details about what the Americans (in the persons of typical American families) wore and ate, the games they played, the work they engaged in, about how they travelled and why, what they wanted out of life and how they went about getting it; about the dangers they met on their long trek westward, and their humor and good courage in meeting those dangers.

"The series takes its titles from the folk songs which were as much a part of every family's equipment for travel as their journey cake and their ammunition. The 95 songs used in the series have been as skillfully woven into scripts as they were woven into the lives of the pioneers. No attempt has been made to copy traditional methods of folk singing. Rather each song is sung as words and music dictate and as any person or group of people might enjoy singing it today. The songs help make vivid the stories about the Clarks and the history they helped to make.

"*Piano Adventures ..... with Mary Van Doren* is a different kind of show. It is designed to present the piano music of some of the world's greatest composers from Bach to MacDowell. Mrs. Van Doren's brilliant piano interpretations are set in a framework of narration planned to be interesting to youngsters from eight to twelve. She has presented similar material to five generations of Philadelphia school children on WIP's Philadelphia School of the Air. She also used the format in Toledo when she was Julliard Graduate Scholar in charge of the Toledo Art Museum's music program.

"In each program the music of a single composer is bound together with informal comment on his life, his work, and the special selections chosen from his music. Mrs. Van Doren's choice of factual material is interesting and stimulating and much of the music used is not too difficult to be played by young piano students. Teachers' manuals and correlated reading lists are available for both series as are audition recordings."

The National Mental Health Foundation, 1790 Broadway, New York City 19, announces release of a new series of transcribed radio programs entitled, *Hi, Neighbor*. By showing how specific personality problems can be solved through effective use of non-psychiatric community resources, the series gives a practical approach to the continuing problem of safeguarding and promoting mental health. Records are available in both the 10-inch long playing

microgroove and 16-inch vinylite at a speed of 33 1-3 r.p.m. Details for purchasing may be obtained by writing Alex Sareyan at the above address.

### General

Columbia Records Inc. has just released a new, fully-cross-referenced 80-page catalog of all its Masterworks, Popular, Children's, Folk Music and International Long Playing Microgroove records released through April, 1950 as well as all available seven-inch LP Microgroove discs.

An illustrated handbook for organizing a program of audio-visual methods has been prepared by the Audio-Visual Education Association of California. Entitled, *Setting Up Your Audio-Visual Education Program* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, \$1.00), it tells school administrators at a glance the answers to 20 of the most practical questions, and sets up standards as to equipment required. Especially practical is the insistence on the use of audiovisual materials in the regular classroom, rather than in the auditorium or in special projection rooms. The handbook is cleverly illustrated by Elizabeth Hacker and contains a foreword by Francis W. Noel, Audio-Visual Director, California State Department of Education.

If you are interested in filmstrip or slide file cabinet write to Neumade Products Corporation, 330 W. 42nd Street, New York 18, New York.



# The Educational Scene

EDITED BY WILLIAM A. JENKINS<sup>1</sup>

"Only the brave should teach, only the men and women whose integrity cannot be shaken, whose minds are enlightened enough to understand the high calling of the teacher, whose hearts are unshakeably loyal to the young, whatever the threats of the old who are in power.

"There is no hope for our world unless we can educate a different kind of man and woman. I put the teacher higher than any other person today in world society in responsibility and in opportunity. Only the brave should teach.

"Only those who love the young should teach. Teaching is not a way to make a livelihood. The livelihood is incidental. Teaching is a vocation. It is as sacred as priesthood; as innate as desire, as inescapable as the genius which compels a great artist. If a teacher has not the concern for humanity, the love of living creatures, the vision of the priest and the artist, he must not teach. Teachers who hate to teach can only have pupils who hate to learn.

"A great and true teacher thinks of the child, he dreams in the child, he sees his visions not in himself but in the flowering of the child into manhood and womanhood. He thinks of the child first and always, not of himself.

"It takes courage to be a teacher and it takes unalterable love for the child."

—Pearl Buck, before the AASA Convention, Atlantic City, 1950.

Some recent articles of interest to teachers of elementary language arts:

*Good Readers! Good Writers! Good Speakers!* by A. J. Phillips, in the Michigan Ed-

ucation *Journal* for February. A sympathetic view of the efforts of our schools in helping boys and girls to master the communication skills which will make them happier, more efficient, and more effective citizens.

*Snowball and the Seven Drawers*, by Mary Alice Natkin, in the February *Clearing House*. A New York City high school teacher of English tells of her five classes—two of foreign-born pupils and three of natives—and the strain put on our mother tongue in their daily use of it.

*Free Reading Periods Pack School Library*, by Margaret Kurilecz, in the February *Clearing House*. A free reading period experiment with an eighth-grade class proved successful, and contagious, and spread to eleven classes in the Dobbs Ferry (N. Y.) High School.

*Both Practical and Personal Writing Are Important to Children*, by Alvina Treut Burrows, in the *Packet* (D. C. Heath and Company). Both types of writing experiences are valuable since both foster progress toward mature literacy, both contribute to optimum personal growth, and both may be truly creative.

*Books Suitable for Small Children*, compiled by Nellie V. MacDonald, in the *Volta Review* for February. Grouped according to these topics: objects and early vocabulary; sense training, reading readiness; animals children's experiences; stories; play ideas for parents; auditory training.

*Evangeline Johnson Teaches English*, by Walter V. Kaulfers, in *Books in their Courses*, February, 1950 (Henry Holt and Company).

<sup>1</sup>Mr. Jenkins is a graduate assistant in English Education of the University of Illinois.

A reprint of Dr. Kaulfer's humorous, yet pithy, views on the teaching of grammar as presented in his speech at the NCTE convention last November.

*Language With a Purpose*, by Mildred V. Johnson, in March *N. J. Educational Review*. As a communication situation which will lead to new experiences and serve the children's purposes, a class in the Ridge Street School and one in the Summer Place School write letters to each other. This is a brief account and evaluation of the project which involves penmanship, spelling, reading, and thought.

*What Did You Get on Your Report Card?* by Ruth Strang, in March *National Parent-Teacher*. Some new light on the old problem and what it means to the child's morale to be marked as unsuccessful.

*English for Personal Dignity*, by Mrs. Dorothy Canfield Fisher, in *Scholastic Teacher* for March. A salute to English teachers who have in their power the ability to "help our younger generation advance from tongue-tied inferiority and frustration into personal freedom and hope."

*Listening Post*, by John Ratliff, in the *Texas Outlook* for Sept. (reprinted in March *Education Digest*). The library in the Marshall Junior High School in Houston is as much a listening center as it is a reading center. Through the use of two electric phonographs with three sets of earphones each, records of *Ivanhoe*, *Treasure Island*, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, and many other novels and musical selections available, the Listening Post has opened up a whole new area of Library expansion.

*Procedures for Developing Reading as Facet of Language*, by Emmett Albert Betts, in the Fall issue of *Visual Digest*. "Language is somewhat like a diamond. It is a precious gift. Its facets are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each facet is polished in sequence.

Work in all facets has been started by the time the average child enters the third grade. Polishing this language is a life's work."



Here are the Junior Literary Guild selections for the month of May, 1950:

For boys and girls 6, 7, and 8 years of age: *The Egg Tree*, by Katherine Milhous. Charles Scribner's Sons, \$2.

For boys and girls 9, 10, and 11 years of age: *Tophill Road*, by Helen Garrett. The Viking Press, \$2.50.

For older girls, 12 to 16 years of age: *Linda's Homecoming*, by Phyllis A. Whitney. David McKay Co., \$2.50.

For older boys, 12 to 16 years of age: *Arctic Venture*, by Kenneth Gilbert. Henry Holt and Co., \$2.50.



Announcement of the winners of the Newbery and Caldecott Awards for children's books was made recently by the Awards Committee of the Children's Library Association, a section of the American Library Association. The Newbery Medal, the twenty-ninth award for "the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children," was presented to Marguerite de Angeli for *The Door in the Wall*, a story of medieval England, published by Doubleday. The Caldecott Medal, the thirteenth annual award for "the most distinguished picture book for children," went to the artist-author Leo Politi for *Song of the Swallows*, published by Scribner.

Runners-up for the Newbery Medal were *Tree of Freedom* (Viking); *The Blue Cat of Castle Town* (Longmans, Green); *Kildee House* (Doubleday); *George Washington* (Scribner), and *Song of the Pines* (Winston).

Runners-up for the Caldecott Medal were *America's Ethan Allen* (Houghton Mifflin); *Wild Birthday Cake* (Doubleday); *Happy Day* (Harper); *Henry—Fisherman* (Scribner);

and *Bartholomew and the Oobleck* (Random House).

The annual banquet in honor of the winners will be held at the time of the seventy-fourth annual conference of the American Library Association which will be held in Cleveland in July.

The University of Oregon *Curriculum Bulletin* of July 15, 1949 (No. 58) is devoted to "Sources for Free and Inexpensive Teaching Materials." Edited by Hugh B. Wood, Professor of Education and Director of the Curriculum Material Laboratory, this issue of the *Bulletin* lists hundreds of sources which can supply materials to supplement and enrich the usual text and reference books. The sources are classified by means of a key as to cost, grade placement, and subject area. For further information write to the College of Education, University of Oregon, Eugene. Price 25 cents.

The Children's Bureau of the Federal Security Agency has a catalog, available to teachers upon request, of its publications which are inexpensively priced and sometimes free. Booklets listed and classified in the catalog include topics of planning for children and youth, health, both physical and mental, social services, general welfare of children, foreign language publications, and other publications.

A revised edition of *Uses for Waste Material*, a 24-page bulletin published by the Association for Childhood Education International, suggests how things can be made from discarded materials. Ideas for making a clothespin doll, orange crate furniture, puppets, sleeping mats, posters, and booklets, are just a few of the many suggestions contained in this attractive booklet with drawings. Fifty cents per copy from the Association

for Childhood Education International, 1200 15th St. NW., Washington 5.

The Library School Class in Children's Literature at the University of Wisconsin has recently released another issue of the *Subject Index to Children's Magazines*. This is a 52-page mimeograph pamphlet which has articles from 23 of the most important children's magazines indexed according to subject, author, and title. This latest issue, Vol. 2 No. 4, is a cumulated issue and covers the period of September 1949 to February 1950. We suggest that interested teachers write for further information to the University of Wisconsin Library School.

Among the items recently offered to teachers by State Teachers Magazines, Inc., are these:

38. "Teacher's Kit for a Study of Railway Transportation," fourth edition, revised, 1950. Includes a set of 57 large pictures; a booklet entitled "The Stories Behind the Pictures," giving in simple and direct language descriptions of each picture; and, a "Teacher's Manual" which suggests study outlines and source material. One available to a teacher. Not available in classroom quantities.
  39. "Learning to Use Your Encyclopedia" may be used in any grade, for one, two, or three lessons. It is accompanied by short and simple exercises, copies of which may be secured for each child.
  40. "Seventy-three Teaching Films Designed for the Primary Grades"; a list of 73 primary grade films on Children of Other Lands, the World They Live In, Animals and Nature and Health which are available from Encyclopedia Britannica Films.
- Write to 307 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 1, enclosing three cents for each item ordered.

To meet the need for American folklore in our school the National Conference on American Folklore for Youth was organized at Ball State Teachers in Muncie, Indiana, last summer. The conference was called by Dr. Elizabeth Pilant of the English Department with the idea that in a democracy, where education is compulsory, instructional materials must fit the needs of the great mass of the students. It was felt that by definition no material could be more closely related to the experience and taste of the students than the folk knowledge of their own country - knowledge of traditional ways of acting and reacting to problems.

Among the recommendations made at the Conference were:

American folk materials should be integrated into existing public school subject fields such as communications, science, social studies, arts and crafts, music, and physical education. It was also recommended that teachers colleges particularly should give courses on how to integrate the folk materials in the different subjects and at all grade levels.

The necessity of getting out specialized bibliographies and instructional materials was recognized. Among the free materials already available upon request to teachers and librarians are:

*Bibliography of American Folk Lore for Boys and Girls*, *Folklore in American Literature, Folklore and History*, *Folk Elements in Midwestern Literature*, *Forty-two Ax Handles* (an article in the *Indiana Teacher* describing the organization and its objectives), and, *The Folklore Approach to Teaching*, and *The Indiana Idea—Folklore for Children* (addresses explaining purposes).

Teachers interested in obtaining any of these free materials should write Dr. Elizabeth Pilant, Executive Secretary, National Con-

ference American Folklore for Youth, Ball State Teachers College, Muncie, Indiana.



A class of ideal size consists of 25 pupils. That is the median opinion of 504 high school teachers who cooperated in a study reported in "What Teachers Say About Class Size," U. S. Office of Education Circular No. 311. Opinions of the individual teachers varied from 6 to 35 pupils. Asked their opinion on how many pupils constitute a small class, the teachers' responses ranged from one to thirty-five. On the question of how many pupils constitute a large class the range responses was from twenty to sixty.

To the question of when is a class too small for efficient instruction, the answers ranged from "one pupil" to "thirty-two pupils." Some teachers felt that a class was too large for efficient instruction when it has twenty pupils, while the limit for others was fifty pupils.



The 1949-50 edition of the *Annotated List of Books for Supplementary Reading* has been just released by the Children's Reading Service. This catalog contains about 750 listings of over 40 publishers, graded from kindergarten to ninth grade, and arranged by topics to aid in selecting books according to the needs and area of interest of the children. One outstanding convenience of the catalog is that grade ranges are given for most titles. That is, if a certain title is listed for grades 4-6, it can be used by advanced students in the fourth grade, as well as by slower children in the sixth grade. Two lists of books for remedial reading, with the *interest* level higher than the *reading* level, are included in the catalog.

For information about the *Annotated List of Books for Supplementary Reading* write the Children's Reading Service, 106 Beekman St., New York 7.





*Children's Books - For Seventy-five Cents or Less*, a useful bibliography for home, school, and library, has been revised by the Association for Childhood Education International. Classification, price, and brief annotation are given for each book listed. It contains indexes by title, author, and publisher.

The bulletin, compiled by Mrs. Mabel Altstetter, Miami University (Ohio), may be obtained from the Association for Childhood Education International, 1200 Fifteenth St., NW., Washington 5. 49p. Price, fifty cents.



*Helping Children Solve Their Problems*, the second 1950 membership service bulletin of the Association for Childhood Education International, was published in March. In its forty pages it deals with the fundamental concerns of adults for children, shows by anecdotal illustration the inter-relationships between adults' concerns for children and some of the problems children must solve, and describes how some parents and teachers are helping children to solve their problems.

In the overall article that introduces the bulletin content, James L. Hymes discusses three kinds of concerns about children: how to help children build courage and faith in themselves, how to help children develop feelings of belongingness in their world, and how to keep alive children's urge to learn and to know.

The three sections that follow deal with these concerns through illustrations contributed by teachers and parents. How to help children understand death, how to help a child adjust to his new school environment, and the problems of junior high school children who are in conflict with their world provide illustrations of how to help children build courage and faith in themselves.

Illustrations from the nursery school, the kindergarten and an intermediate age group show how teachers have helped these children to develop feelings of belonging in their world. Fourth graders who wanted to learn to read, grouping children to promote their growth, and questions that involved concepts of such abstractions as relief and peace and how they were answered illustrate how teachers helped children to keep alive their urge to learn and to know.

The problems dealt with in this bulletin are not commonplace ones yet they are poignant problems of children's everyday living. How parents and teachers have helped to solve their problems are perhaps not the usual ways but they show insight and courage on the part of both children and adults. Out of such endeavors will schools be changed to meet better the needs of children. Out of such insight will children's living today be such that they can meet the demands of the tomorrow they face.

Copies of this bulletin can be obtained from the Association for Childhood Education International, 1200 - 15th St., N. W., Washington 5, D. C. for 75 cents a copy.



*To Clarify our Problems: a Guide to Role-Playing*, by Claire S. Schuman and Oscar Tarcov, has just been published by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. The four-page pamphlet offers instructions to teachers and other group leaders on the mechanics and use of the technique to help achieve democratic participation of all members of a discussion group. Write to B'nai B'rith, 327 S. LaSalle St., Chicago, 4. Price 10 cents.



## Review and Criticism

[The brief reviews in this issue are by Celia B. Stendler, Lillian E. Novotny, and La Tourette Stockwell. Unsigned annotations are by the editor.]

### *For the Teacher*

*Make It Yourself!* By Bernice Wells Carlson. Illustrated by Aline Hansens. 150 Fifth Avenue, New York 11: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press. Cloth, \$2.00. Paper, \$1.35.

*Tourplay.* By Winfield C. Higgins. Illustrated by Phoebe King Higgins. 313 West 35th Street, New York 1: The William-Frederick Press. \$1.50.

Elementary teachers are frequently called upon by parents for help on many kinds of problems involved in child rearing. Two new books can be recommended to fill the demand in certain areas. *Make It Yourself!* is a handicraft book for boys and girls that can be used in the six-to-twelve age range. The contents are organized around the materials to be used—plain paper, paper plates, vegetables, nature materials, kitchen-cupboard materials and the like. The book differs from the ordinary run of handicraft books in that most of the finished articles are both functional and artistic. Toy clocks and puppet dolls, greeting cards and pull toys, corn husk dolls and Christmas wreaths as well as scores of other articles can be easily made from the simple directions given. Elementary teachers, too, will find the book useful at holiday times when children are making gifts for relatives and friends.

*Tourplay* will prove a boon to both parents and children on long automobile trips. It contains a collection of over fifty games which may be played while actually on the road or during rest stops. Billboards, license plates, speedometer and road maps furnish

the equipment needed to play. Because skill with number and alphabet (beyond the beginner's skill), a knowledge of geography, or a sense of rhyme are necessary for most of the games, it is best used with sevens and up.

C. B. S.

*A Report of the 5th Annual Conference on Reading,* University of Pittsburgh, July 11-22, 1949. Edited by Gerald A. Yoakam. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1950.

The theme of the 1949 Conference was the program of basal reading instruction. Dr. Yoakam, Guy L. Bond, Nell Murphy, Nila Banton Smith, and E. W. Dolch discussed such questions as "The Pros and Cons of Basal Reading Instruction," "Continuous Growth in Basal Reading," "Adjustment of Basal Reading to Individual Needs," "Development of Basal Reading Techniques," and "Vocabulary of Basal Reading Instruction." Part IV consists of a long and valuable list of discussion questions relating to basal reading. This volume would serve as an excellent basis for discussion in faculty groups and teacher education classes.

*Teaching in Elementary School,* By Marie A. Mehl, Hubert H. Mills, and Harl R. Douglass. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1950. \$4.50.

A very practical and interesting discussion of the problems of teaching in the elementary school, with an abundance of concrete illustrations from the classroom. The point of view is in accord with current knowledge of the learning process. The discussions of planning are especially helpful. The language arts are considered in close relation to child development factors.

*Elementary Curriculum in Intergroup Relations: Case Studies in Instruction.* By the

Staff of Intergroup Education in Cooperating Schools. Hilda Taba, Director. Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1950. \$2.50.

This excellent volume consists chiefly of plans and classroom activities relating to problems in human relations. The descriptions are based on actual experiences in numerous projects for which the Staff served as consultants. The range of types of situations is wide, including the family, the community, the classroom, and relations between races, nationalities, and other culture groups. The discussions are rich in illustrations from pupil comment and experience, from group discussions. An especially valuable chapter summarizes the curriculum principles involved, and another draws together the major techniques employed in the various projects. This publication should be in the hands of elementary school curriculum-workers and teachers everywhere.

*Teaching the Child to Read.* By Guy L. Bond Wagner and Eva Bond Wagner. Revised edition. Macmillan, \$3.75.

This revision of a popular book in reading places great emphasis upon the problems of individualization in reading instruction. The discussion is simple, direct, non-technical—admirable for the beginning student and the less experienced teacher. The recommendations are based upon recent research findings in the field.

#### *For Early Adolescents*

*Bill And His Neighbors.* By Lois Fisher. Houghton Mifflin, \$1.75.

Books for boys and girls in the area of intercultural relations are fortunately improving in both quantity and quality. Lois Fisher's latest is a delightful contribution that can be used as early as the fifth grade level and will also be enjoyed by high school students. The author uses cartoons profusely and wonderfully as she has in previous publications. *Bill And His Neighbors* is a story attacking pre-

judice. It does so by the clever device of making prejudice seem stupid and absurd. Bill loses out in a drawing contest, but he can't show anger against the winner because Dad would disapprove. However, he figures out that the winner came from a family of Mustache Wearers and the judges who awarded the prize also were Mustache Wearers. Therefore Bill decides to be against Mustache Wearers and Mustache-Wearing families. Gradually the poison spreads through out Blossomville Junior High until the students are divided into two camps on the basis of mustaches in the family, and the baseball team almost loses a game because of prejudice in their midst. The application to racial and national prejudice is cleverly made. Probably the most important contribution of the book is the way in which the roots of prejudice are traced—to unfulfilled needs for affection and belonging as a child, to feelings of disappointment, envy or fright at any time during one's life. Socially and psychologically *Bill And His Neighbors* is an important contribution to children's literature.

C. B. S.

*The Lees of Arlington.* By Marguerite Vance. Illustrated by Nedda Walker. Dutton, \$2.50.

The way in which Mary and Robert E. Lee met and faced the joys and sorrows which followed each other in swift succession in the course of a lifetime which was so closely woven into the fabric of our country's growth should bring an understanding of courage and fortitude to the boys and girls who read this story of two great Americans and their family. Robert E. Lee's selfless interest in the land he loved and his wife's unswerving devotion are beautifully told in this narrative recommended for intermediate and junior high school boys and girls.

L. E. N.

#### *For the Middle Grades*

*Adventures in Cactus Land.* By Betty B. Herndon. Illustrated by the author. Caxton Printers, \$3.00.

The adventures of Billy and Willy Thrasher are told with simplicity and charm in this delightful collection of stories about their experiences with friends and neighbors: Ronnie Road Runner, Honey Hummingbird, Mr. Pack Rat, Mrs. Horned Toad and her family, and the Quail family. Illustrations, too, full of humor, will delight children in the intermediate grades.

L. E. N.

*Prince of the Ranch.* By Olive W. Burt. Illustrated by Bob Meyers. Bobbs Merrill, \$2.50.

Prince is a city bred collie who goes with his master Tim to visit a sheep ranch in the Uinta Mountains in Northern Utah. The ranchers didn't think city folk were of much use, but Prince proved himself a true sheep dog and a hero and Tim proved he was a brave boy so eventually they came to get the respect of the sheep herders. Meanwhile by way of an absorbing story, the reader has painlessly acquired much fascinating information about herding and raising sheep.

L. T. S.

*More Danish Tales.* Retold by Mary C. Hatch. Illustrated by Edgun. Harcourt Brace, \$2.50.

This is the second volume of Danish folk tales which Miss Hatch has arranged for the delight of American children. The stories are robust and humorous but they lack (happily, from this reviewer's point of view) much of the primitive blood-letting that is characteristic of many folk tales. The Danish artist, Edgun, who translated the stories for Miss Hatch, has also by his two-color illustrations helped the author to convey the magic and imaginativeness of these adventures with trolls, giants, and enchanted princesses. My favorite heroes are Graylegs and The Boy Who Was Never Afraid.

L. T. S.

*Moro Boy.* By Lysle Carveth. Illustrated by Anne Vaughan. Longmans, Green, \$2.50. Lysle Carveth is an American teacher who

went to the Philippines and came to know well the native people and their customs. In both her previous book, *Jungle Boy*, and in this account of an eight year old Moro boy on the island of Mindanao, she has written two stories which American youngsters will not only enjoy but through them will also come to know better the children of the Philippines. Alug is a modern native boy who gets lost in the jungle, and after many adventures which call for resourcefulness and ingenuity, finally gets home safely. Perhaps the most notable quality of this very excellent book is the manner in which ancient traditions and rituals, the life of the jungle, and the very natural reactions of a small boy are combined to give the feeling of contemporaneity.

L. T. S.

*Rodeo.* By Glen Rounds. Illustrated by the author. Holiday House, \$2.25.

The author, who was born and reared in the South Dakota Badlands where he learned to ride almost as soon as he could walk, has used cowboy dialect and his own inimitable brand of humor to give graphic details about each event in a rodeo—how it originated and rules that have developed. Sixty action drawings are replete with humor. Fortunately for the "tenderfoot," there is a glossary of terms. The down-to-earth quality of this account should help to de-glamorize synthetic cowboys for those boys and girls, from the intermediate level up, who love horses, cowboys, and the West.

L. E. N.

*Yours Till Niagara Falls.* Compiled by Lillian Morrison. Decorated by Marjorie Bauernschmidt. Crowell, \$1.75.

This reviewer is not sure whether adults or children will best enjoy the collection of auto-graph verses published under the title, *Yours Till Niagara Falls*. Somewhere along in the fifth grade and continuing through high school, as sure to appear as jacks and marbles with primary children in the Spring, is the auto-



graph book. The author of this collection has selected those rhymes and sayings which have appeared frequently in albums or which have a special flavor. They will help those students who are at a loss as to what to write in an autograph book, but they will also serve as an interesting sidelight on the American temperament. Adults will feel a nostalgic twinge as they read such daring verses as:

"I want to write something original  
But I don't know how to begin.  
There's nothing original about me  
Unless it's original sin."

and:

"Roses are blue,  
Violets are pink.  
After you've had  
Your thirteenth drink."

C. B. S.

### *For Younger Children*

*Two Little Trains*. By Margaret Wise Brown.  
Pictures by Jean Charlot. William R. Scott.

*Two Little Trains* is a delightful story told in rhyme which should appeal to pre-school railroad enthusiasts. It tells, as the name implies, of two trains on their way to the West. On the way they go through a tunnel (Pennsylvania); over a bridge (Mississippi); they get rained on, snowed on, blown on in the prairies; they climb the mountains (Rockies) and eventually reach the ocean, where the boy and girl who had been the sole passengers on the train go bathing. The rhythm of *Two Little Trains* is strong and the rhyme charming. Illustrations include both black and whites in simple line drawings, and bold color combinations.

C. B. S.

*Fireman Casey and Fireboat 999*. By Esther K. Meeks. Illustrations by Ernie King. Wilcox and Follett, \$1.50.

Fireman Casey is not an ordinary fireman; he is a fireman on a fireboat, as he makes clear to his young reader in the opening pages of this book. The story goes on to explain the duties of a fireboat, and to present in fascinating detail exactly how a fireboat works. Woven into the descriptive material is the story of the fireboat in action, and how brave Fireman Casey saves Gusieppe, the fruit-cart man, and his horse from a fiery death. Boys and girls from five-to-nine will be interested in the information presented in this book. It is unfortunate that writers of such materials do not skip the fiction part of the book. As research has shown, children prefer their science information in "pure" form rather than cluttered up with extraneous plots.

C. B. S.

*A Name For Kitty*. By Phyllis McGinley. Illustrated by Feodor Rojankovsky. Simon and Schuster, \$.25.

An imaginative story about familiar farm animals, including the kitten, which will delight children two to four.

L. T. S.

*Counting Rhymes*. Illustrated by Corinne Malvern. Simon and Schuster, \$.25.

A score and more of the old rhymes such as *Three Men in a Tub* and *Tit Tat Toe* illustrated in a manner which will add much to the pleasure if not to the arithmetic of children under five.

L. T. S.

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